

VANISHING POINT

Screenplay
by
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FOREWARD

The song lyrics quoted in this film treatment range from the juvenil and naive to the overtly risque and are used with the express purpose of illustrating the possibilities of a musical commentary running parallel to the picture.

They should be then considered as samples and examples.

This counterpoint of words and music and images may have been done before many times in musicals and / or in comedies but never in dramatic films.

Our intention is to create (or rather to try) a new form, the true melo-drama - a musical drama using pop songs as Wagner used opera. Thus the function of lyrics and tunes will be not only to comment on the action but to control it, and furthermore, to generate film-action.

All this is to be done with music on the sound-track (which has no visible source: actually, it always seems to come out of nowhere) but with direct relays from broadcasting stations, radios, P.A. systems, etc. Consequently, visible sound sources are ever-present throughout the film, assuming "leading roles" in their own right. For instance, in all the sequences on the highway the car-radio will become a real though disembodied presence, all invisible "passenger" linking the driver to the remote DJ who is his guide through the maze of patrol cars, police forces, barricades. But this thread of a voice is as impotent as the automobile or as the electronic device itself to extricate the hero from the labyrinthine tragedy in which the film fatally, automatically ends.

FADE IN:

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

Somewhere in California. A car is seen rolling along US Route 50, a multi-lane highway.

But the road is otherwise strangely deserted.

The car is a white Ford Galaxie. New but dusty.

CLOSE UP THE DRIVER

Ruggedly handsome, about 35 though looking somewhat older now - haggard tired face, bleary-eyed, unshaven. Both car and driver must have spent a long tough stretch on the road.

There is something else about the man, an urgency - some vital energy.

NEW ANGLE DRIVER AND CAR

At the very beginning we did not realize that he was taking the road uncommonly fast, even for a deserted freeway. But now we do. (Tearing sounds, shreds of landscape rushing dizzily past the windows, jerky vibrations shaking the steering-wheel). It is clear that some of the man's kicks come from speeding.

EXT. HIGHWAY (25 MILES AHEAD) DAY

A steam-roller is slowly creeping in the opposite direction, as if on a collision course with the Galaxie. In fact, the roller is followed closely by a speed cop riding at a snail's pace - obviously an escort.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

The man driving, with concentration.

EXT. HIGHWAY (THROUGH WINDSHIELD) DAY

The totally empty road.

EXT. INTERSECTION (20 MILES AHEAD) DAY

Highway patrolmen are diverting the oncoming traffic, forcing it onto the intersecting road. Behind them we see barriers being hastily erected.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

The man, his foot on the accelerator.

EXT. INTERSECTION DAY

Not far from the barriers a mammoth bulldozer-crane is being shifted from the ditch onto the main road. The CAMERA PANS AROUND to reveal an enormous Army-transport helicopter poised in the fields. Its rotors are still and people crowd around it.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

The car, moving fast towards the intersection.

EXT. INTERSECTION DAY

Several police cars pull up at the barriers, then approach the spot where the bulldozer is awkwardly being set on the road.

ANOTHER ANGLE THE BULLDOZER

Crosswise, its derrick almost spans all lanes. Through its spars we see men in overalls directing the positioning of the machine. The CAMERA HOLDS. There is silence and menace in the air.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

But in the car the driver keeps on travelling towards the intersection, apparently unaware of the hold-up ahead. Now from a shirt pocket he fishes out a small envelope. Deftly he opens it. Pills. He takes some.

EXT. INTERSECTION DAY

As the steam-roller arrives, the patrolmen in charge let it pass into the space between the barriers and the bulldozer. With an impatient gesture, underlined by the roar of his machine, the escort speeds up and leaves the roller behind to join other cops gathering near the bulldozer - which is still being manoeuvred.

NEW ANGLE THE ENCLOSURE

Police motor-cycles parked behind patrol cars.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

The driver notices something in the sky.

EXT. SKY DAY

A helicopter hovering above the car.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

Suddenly the driver is concerned.

INT. HELICOPTER DAY

The co-pilot contacting somebody over the radio.

EXT. ENCLOSURE DAY

A police officer in constant touch with the helicopter. As he talks over the radio, another officer has a road map spread over the fender of a squad-car. He is marking the map while giving instructions to the signal officer. (In the BACKGROUND we see the steam roller being positioned beside the now still bulldozer. The roller completes the barricade by filling the gap between the end of the crane and the ditch. In the FOREGROUND several officers and policemen and marshals surround the radio post. There are also eager journalists plus the usual paraphernalia of radio, TV and press).

When the officer finishes marking the map, the CAMERA COMES CLOSER IN on it and we see that US Route 50 will lead the Galaxie fatally to a point marked with a cross.

EXT. GALAXIE (FROM COPTER) DAY

The helicopter is flying right over the car.

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

As the helicopter veers towards the road stretching behind the car.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

The driver catches sight of something on the road ahead.

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

Across the flat landscape we see the roadblock.

EXT. THE ROADBLOCK DAY

Officer and policemen are watching the car through binoculars. Film cameras are trained on the approaching car. A TV camera shoots through his zoom lens -

EXT. GALAXIE (THROUGH TV CAMERA) DAY

- as the car begins to brake. But it does not stop altogether. With braking momentum, the Galaxie swings around completely - and speeds away in the opposite direction.

EXT. ROADBLOCK DAY

The communications officer rushes to his radio-phone to sputter frantic orders into it.

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

The car tearing away from the roadblock.

EXT. SKY DAY

The helicopter appears on the horizon and come back to hover over the car.

EXT. CAR AND COPTER DAY

The helicopter is barely able to keep up.

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

The car takes a slope at the greatest speed, lurching as it does so - to stop suddenly at the very top, skidding dangerously, swerving left and right and finally coming to a grinding halt.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

The driver is amazed and amused.

EXT. HIGHWAY (FROM TOP OF SLOPE) DAY

As a considerable distance, seething under the desert sun, several dark specks advance across the burning asphalt - police cars and motor-cycles. Many of them.

EXT. HIGHWAY (FROM INSIDE CAR) DAY

Through the windshield, the cars and bikes are black phosphenes.

EXT. CAR AND COPTER DAY

When the helicopter reaches the car's position the Galaxie is in motion already, turning back again, speeding off along the highway in its original direction and finally going through a ditch and across the fields.

EXT. FIELDS DAY

Suddenly, a barbed-wire stockade cuts the Galaxie short. The car swerves, skids, sweeps around at great speed and comes back onto the road.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

The driver looks really worried. Then he finds a solution.

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

The car brakes - to take a right-angle turn into a dirt road. It leaves a trail of dust behind, almost disappearing into a dust cloud.

EXT. DIRT ROAD DAY

But not far from the highway the car has to stop again. The big wooden gates of a ranch block the dirt road.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

The driver now seems to reflect upon his situation for a moment. Now he is not worried any more. He pauses to light a cigarette, coolly. He turns his radio on. Then, calmly, he wheels around - tires screeching, radio blasting out rock music, dirt clouding the windscreen and the road.

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

The car coming back to Route 50.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

The driver is smiling, smoking casually.

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

The Galaxie is rolling along US Route 50, almost as at the beginning of the film - heading for its forced rendezvous.

The the FRAME FREEZES. Over this frozen but nonetheless speeding image - phased colours - receding lines, molten metal - we print the title:

VANISHING POINT

This title is blurred as if by speed.

Slowly superimposed over the frozen image, the outline of a black Farina Cadillac - like a later exposure - appears to be overtaking the Galaxie. But there is no actual movement. Only a sense of motion through a still impression. The Galaxie becomes increasingly blurred, the Cadillac infinitely sharper. The the Galaxie disappears completely and the black Farina Cadillac unfreezes, simultaneous with --

FIRST CREDITS OVER

The black car is seen rolling along US Route 50 - any car on any day, in the thick of ordinary traffic on any American Continental Highway.

MORE CREDITS OVER

INT. FARINA CADILLAC DAY

We see the same man who was driving the Ford Galaxie. But he does not look worried or restless now. As a matter of fact, he is as bored as any truck driver - and like most professional drivers he is driving with great ease, comfortably.

(Obviously the PROLOGUE was a FLASH-FORWARD).

LAST CREDITS OVER

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

The landscape has changed.

EXT. HIGHWAY TWILIGHT

We are now on US Highway 40

EXT. HIGHWAY NIGHT

The Cadillac cruising steadily.

INT. CADILLAC MIDNIGHT

The driver is bored but tireless. Music comes over the radio.

INT. CADILLAC SUNRISE

The driver yawns but his is far from drowsy. Music over the radio.

INT. CADILLAC DAY

The car is shrouded in heavy rain-fall. Music continues.

ALL CREDITS END

EXT. HIGHWAY & CITY APPROACHES NIGHT

The car leaves the road and goes through underpasses leading to a city.

EXT. CITY NIGHT

The car enters the city proper. A legend is PRINTED OVER:

DENVER, Colo.

11:00pm Friday

EXT. DOWNTOWN DENVER NIGHT

The car moving through deserted streets.

EXT. BUILDING NIGHT

The car pulls into a neon-signed car storage - ARGO'S CAR DELIVERY AGENCY.

INT. GARAGE NIGHT

Except for the lighted reception-booth, the place looks as empty as the desert. The Cadillac goes further into the building, towards the office.

INT. OFFICE (THROUGH WINDOW) NIGHT

An old clerk, drowsily playing solitaire and smoking a dead cigar-stub. When he hears the noise of the engine, he gets up at once and comes out towards the car, yawning a very funny, noisy yawn. The CAMERA FOLLOWS him.

OLD CLERK
Ah, Kowalski ...

He is something of a comedian. Without getting out, KOWALSKI opens the glove compartment, takes some papers from it and hands them along with the car keys to the OLD CLERK. He takes them with great histrionics.

OLD CLERK (CONT'D)
... plus the keys to a shortened
weekend. Both of you, welcome!
Not to mention the car --

Still giving no sign of leaving the car, matter-of-factly -

KOWALSKI
Hi,. Anything for Frisco?

OLD CLERK
You're not going back tonight?

KOWALSKI
Yeah, right now.

OLD CLERK
You're gonna kill yourself one day,
you know.

KOWALSKI
One day, one night. Doesn't make
much difference.

OLD CLERK
So, why not wait till Monday?

KOWALSKI

So you can go home, like right now.

OLD CLERK

(laughing)

Just before midnight. You know something? When the clock strikes twelve my car has an urge to turn into a pumpkin.

KOWALSKI

Blackie, you're a born actor.

OLD CLERK

That's what my wife says if I get home after midnight and tell her I've been waitin' for you all evenin'.

KOWALSKI laughs.

OLD CLERK (CONT'D)

(concerned)

Seriously, why don't you wait at least till tomorrow. I bet you could do with some rest.

KOWALSKI

Can't do that. Have to get back tonight.

(looking around)

Where's the car?

OLD CLERK

Take your pick.

OLD CLERK produces a pile of car dockets and, shuffling them, spreads them out in his hands like a fan of playing cards.

OLD CLERK (CONT'D)

Pick a card. Any card.

Smiling, KOWALSKI picks one and shows it to OLD CLERK.

OLD CLERK (CONT'D)

(like a magician)

Hey, Presto!

He points to the other side of the garage --

FULL SHOT CAR

A brand-new but otherwise ordinary looking Ford Galaxie. Yet - there is in its unbelievable whiteness something definitely, fatally Melvillean.

OLD CLERK (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The Queen of Spades! A hopped-up bitch.

CUT TO:

EXT. SERVICE STATION (DENVER) NIGHT

Three male attendants are servicing the Ford Galaxie thoroughly. KOWALSKI is sitting in it.

INT. GALAXIE NIGHT

The big modern service station is shining white, with par lights reflected on the hood and windshield. In the background, a glass-walled office and inside it a man looking for something in his desk. KOWALSKI is listening to the radio and smoking quietly as he waits, his face visibly drawn.

Over the radio, Otis Redding and Carla Thomas are singing "It Takes Two."

The man comes from the office with some papers in hand. Middle-aged and regularly handsome, he is clearly the owner of the station. His name is ZAHARIAS. He and KOWALSKI seem to be professionally acquainted. KOWALSKI rubs his eyes and takes the pencil ZAHARIAS abruptly hands him. But instead of signing the bills he stops in mid-action. Touched either by the music or a memory, he goes into reverie.

MEMORY MONTAGE

Images grow and multiply in the shallows of KOWALSKI's mind:
Flashes of super-natural whiteness. / A deserted beach. / Toboggans racing at the speed of light. / A car slowly driving across snowy fields. (This last image is sharper, more fixed.)

INT. DREAM-CAR (BACK PROJECTION) DAY/WINTER

In the snow-white car KOWALSKI is inviting a radiant beautiful young girl to make love. She is amused by it.

GIRL (DISEMBODIED VOICE)
Here?

CUT TO:

EXT. SERVICE STATION NIGHT

It is not the dream-girl but --

ZAHARIAS
Here.

He is waiting for KOWALSKI to sign the tab, a little put out.

ZAHARIAS (CONT'D)
Your service account.

KOWALSKI emerges from his daze.

KOWALSKI
Oh, I'm sorry.

ZAHARIAS
(jesting)
That's alright, but keep your eyes
open on the road.

KOWALSKI smiles wanly. The he signs the tab hurriedly, hands
trembling.

ZAHARIAS (CONT'D)
Take your time.

KOWALSKI
Don't have any. Have to be back in
Frisco by three tomorrow.

ZAHARIAS
That's plenty of time.

KOWALSKI
Three in the afternoon.

ZAHARIAS
(scandalised)
You can't make San Francisco in
sixteen hours!
(he looks at his watch)
Less than that - it's almost thirty
after! You won't do it.

KOWALSKI
(flatly)
Have to.

EXT. CITY OUTSKIRTS (DENVER) NIGHT

As the Galaxie arrives at a kind of Hell's Angels' hangout in Arvadas. Dozens of motor-cycles are parked near a shack with an incongruous neon sign over it. Men and women in the typical Angel's costume and attitudes are hanging around. KOWALSKI pulls up.

KOWALSKI
(calling out)
Hey, Jake?

A lanky, Afro-haired, bearded Negro turns around. He is wearing a sleeveless denim jacket, levis and black leather boots. He smiles broadly when he sees who is calling and comes over.

JAKE
Hi, K baby! Welcome to Somorra.

KOWALSKI
Can I score?

JAKE
Yeah, sure baby. What's it gonna be? You name it, I got it.

KOWALSKI
Need some pep.

JAKE
Whatever turns you on, baby.

JAKE is the friend who is also a pusher - or vice-versa. He searches inside his jacket and produces a small envelope. He hands it to KOWALSKI.

KOWALSKI
(meaning it)
Thanks.

JAKE
Forget it.

KOWALSKI is suddenly very tired, more than he ever thought. He tears the envelope, takes two amphetamine pills from it and puts them quickly into his mouth.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Hey, I'll getcha some water, man.
I never could of guessed you needed
them so --

KOWALSKI

It's OK.

JAKE

You sure?

KOWALSKI

Yes I'm sure.

KOWALSKI is once more ready to leave.

KOWALSKI (CONT'D)

I have to be going now.

JAKE

Transcend the bullshit, man.

He points at two superb she-Angels standing by their bikes, languorously enjoying a smoke.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Just drop out and join the cause.

KOWALSKI

Got to go though. No offence - but I do have to be in Frisco by three tomorrow afternoon.

JAKE

(chuckling loudly)

You're putting me on!

KOWALSKI

I wish to God I was.

JAKE

Then you're kidding yourself. You won't make it, baby.

KOWALSKI

(piqued)

Wanna bet?

JAKE looks at KOWALSKI, then proceeds to an appraisal of the Galaxie. He is usually a bit scornful of cars.

JAKE

Well, this baby must be a souped-up something - but even so ...

KOWALSKI

She's hopped-up to over one fifty.

JAKE

Heavy! But even so you won't score. Not this time, K baby. Not even with a Shelby mother. Fifteen hours - wow!

KOWALSKI

D'you want to bet the tab for the bennies?

JAKE merely grins.

KOWALSKI (CONT'D)

Do you? I'll call you from Frisco on arrival. Three tomorrow. If I don't, it's double the deal the next time around. If I call, like the amphetamines are for free.

JAKE

(laughing)

On the house, as they say.

KOWALSKI

Yes.

JAKE

Alright. You're on. But I know I'm stealing from you.

KOWALSKI

You might - and then you might not.

Then - out of nowhere comes a strange surfing sound, distinctly different from the noise of engines. Both KOWALSKI and JAKE turn around to locate it.

EXT. THE STREET NIGHT

A gang of about ten Negro kids on skate-boards come rolling down the street. They crowd the motor-cycle parking lot to skate around the machines. Then they discover the Galaxie and come over to surround it admiringly. The keep rolling, figure skating deftly around the car. KOWALSKI watches the kids enviously, almost entranced.

MEMORY MONTAGE

More dream images flashing through his mind: Toboggans. / A police car speeding through a city. / Kids racing soap-box cars down a steep hill in late thirties San Francisco -

JAKE (V.O.)
What the hell are those kids into
now?

EXT. SERVICE STATION NIGHT

The gang is not so much admiring the Galaxie as trying to wreck it. Every time they pass near the car they manage to scratch a tire or a fender, surreptitiously, pretending they are merely skating by. JAKE is outraged.

JAKE
Come on, beat it! Get the hell
outa here!

BOY
(at Jake)
FUCK YOU!

JAKE is about to hit him. But KOWALSKI stops him, grasping his arm from the car.

KOWALSKI
Let him be, Jake.

BOY
(at Kowalski)
Fuck you too honkie! We don't need
your help!

OTHER BOYS
(at Kowalski)
Fuck you whitey!
(then at Jake)
That goes for you too, shit-lover!

They are all leaving, skating, shouting: "MOTHER-FUCKERS!!!" KOWALSKI and JAKE watch them go away.

JAKE
(almost admiringly)
How does that grab you?

KOWALSKI won't say. He is still looking at the kids skating off into the night.

JAKE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Heavy, these kids, man! They're
too much!
(then to Kowalski)
Like, we're getting old, K!

KOWALSKI
I guess so.

He starts the car, begins to move on.

KOWALSKI (CONT'D)
Talk to you later, Jake.

JAKE
Yeah, man, sure.
(then at the moving car)
Good luck, whitey!

JAKE guffaws at KOWALSKI's answer - an obscene gesture.

EXT./INT. MONTAGE (REAL) NIGHT

KOWALSKI drives out of Denver as if entering a maze. / The Galaxie going into a tunnel. / Taking a steep bend inside the tunnel. / Coming out of the tunnel and going onto a by-pass / then climbing to a fly-over. / Later driving down a ramp. / To come out finally onto the approach-lanes of the highway - a forest of road-signs, lamp-posts, and guard-rails. Suddenly
--

EXT. HIGHWAY NIGHT

An intercontinental highway opens out across the boundless prairie.

INT. GALAXIE NIGHT

KOWALSKI feeling the open spaces as a newly found freedom.

EXT. HIGHWAY NIGHT

The Galaxie pacing along amid the regular night traffic.

EXT. HIGHWAY AFTER MIDNIGHT

The traffic is sparser and the Galaxie keeps rolling.

INT. GLAXIE NIGHT

KOWALSKI is driving attentively and listening to music.

Aretha Franklin is singing over the radio.

Somehow her song deepens his solitude - and perhaps comments on his resolve:

ARETHA FRANKLIN (RADIO)
Won't you come home, Bill Bailey
Come on home!
I'LL DO ALL THE COOKIN'
An' I'll even pay the rent.
I know I done you wrong
But Bill Bailey please come home!

EXT. GALAXIE AND HIGHWAY NIGHT

The Galaxie cruising beautifully.

ARETHA FRANKLIN (RADIO)
Come on here
Come on now
Come on home
Bill!
Bill Bailey we need you now!

The car disappearing in the distance, faded out by the desert and the night.

ARETHA FRANKLIN (RADIO) (CONT'D)
Bill Bailey won't you please come home?

The song lingers on.

EXT. ALL-NIGHT DRIVE-IN EATERY (OFF TABERNASK) NIGHT

Several cars are parked around the stand. One of them is the Galaxie. It is still very dark.

INT. GALAXIE NIGHT

KOWALSKI flashes the headlights twice. He is impatient. A girl in tight-fitting pants and a pinafore comes over. She brings food on a tray. Earlier in the night she would have been pretty but now she looks tired and vexed. She speaks in an angry nasal twang.

WAITRESS
I'm coming, I'm coming!

But she takes a long time to fix the tray to the window.

KOWALSKI
I'm in a hurry.

WAITRESS
So am I, mister. So's everybody
else in this world. But exackly!

KOWALSKI says no more and takes a sandwich and a beer can from the tray. The WAITRESS is not happy about it.

WAITRESS (CONT'D)
This is not a self-service, you
know!

KOWALSKI
OK, OK! How much?

She is looking for something in her pockets, all the pockets.

WAITRESS
Just a minute, mister, lemme just
find your check!

Seeing her confusion, KOWALSKI hands her two dollars.

KOWALSKI
Here. Keep the change.

He starts the car, driving away. WAITRESS is at a loss.

WAITRESS
(shouting)
Hey, HOLD ON! The tray, mister,
the tray!

KOWALSKI stops for the WAITRESS to retrieve her tray. Then he shoots out, tires squealing on the pavement. The WAITRESS spits out her contempt at the speeding car.

WAITRESS (CONT'D)
(shouting louder)
HIPPIE! I hope you get
indigestion!

HIGH ANGLE SHOT EATERY

Quietly but quickly another car leaves the drive-in to follow on the Galaxie's trail. It is a Pontiac Parisienne.

EXT. HIGHWAY NIGHT

The Parisienne is carefully following the Galaxie.

INT. GALAXIE NIGHT

KOWALSKI is driving and eating his meal. He has not noticed his pursuer, as yet. Through the car rear window we see the Parisienne coming closer to the Galaxie.

EXT. GALAXIE AND PONTIAC NIGHT

But the Pontiac does not come any closer and keeps on tracking the Galaxie.

EXT. HIGHWAY AND CARS NIGHT

The two cars have the road to themselves and the scene takes on the air of a cautious but relentless chase. We hear a pop group playing the percussive, pertinent "Speek Freaks".

INT. GALAXIE NIGHT

The song comes over KOWALSKI's radio. He has finished his meal. After carefully picking a place, he throws the sandwich wrapper out of the car. When he is about to dump the beer-can, he sees the Pontiac in his rear-view mirror. After getting rid of the can, KOWALSKI speeds ahead. In no time at all headlights hit him directly from behind, the glare in the mirror hurting his eyes.

EXT. GALAXIE AND PONTIAC NIGHT

The Parisienne flashing its headlights several times.

INT. GALAXIE NIGHT

KOWALSKI, out of curiosity, begins to decelerate. He looks questioningly into his mirror. Now he is concerned.

INSERT REAR-VIEW MIRROR

In the reflection, the Pontiac looms menacingly.

EXT. PONTIAC AND GALAXIE NIGHT

The Parisienne closes the gap between the two cars. Soon the two cars are cruising slowly, then drawing level.

INT. GALAXIE NIGHT

But KOWALSKI still cannot see who has been trailing him.

WOMAN'S VOICE (OFF)
(mockingly)
That's not nice.

KOWALSKI'S POV

A beautiful blonde girl is driving the Pariesienne. She throws her car forward, to cut in cleanly in front of the Galaxie. Then she slows down so that KOWALSKI is forced to swerve right and out-drive her. But the BLONDE is not deterred. She is chasing KOWALSKI, racing him, driving dangerously to meet him.

She manages to overtake him. Then she is losing him. Now once more getting at him. She is trying to overtake him again. She finally accomplishes it - but not without some help from KOWALSKI.

The BLONDE is leading now. She slows down. KOWALSKI slows down too.

The BLONDE changes lanes and driver her Pariesienne alongside the Galaxie.

BLONDE
That's not nice either.

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

He makes a sign that he cannot hear.

CLOSE UP BLONDE

Making the obvious more than clear, she makes a follow-me gesture.

EXT. PARIESIENNE AND GALAXIE

The BLONDE drives off the highway and halts. KOWALSKI crosses both lanes behind her and stops for a moment beside her car. He looks at her quizzically.

BLONDE
I said that's not nice.

KOWALSKI
What isn't

BLONDE
Littering the desert. It sounds
like LBJ striking back.

KOWALSKI laughs briefly. He is looking grave again, perhaps worried. The BLONDE notices it.

BLONDE (CONT'D)
Don't look so worried.

KOWALSKI
I'm not worried, just puzzled.

BOY
Puzzled? Why?

KOWALSKI
Because I've finally found a
beautiful girl who makes jokes.

She smiles and shows even white teeth.

BLONDE
Thank you.

KOWALSKI
Thank you. Bye.

He starts leaving.

BLONDE
(shouting)
Wait!
(to herself almost
inaudibly)
- Please!

He stops the car to look back.

KOWALSKI'S POV

The BLONDE trying to look like the lonesome Traveller,
leaning out of her window.

INT. GALAXIE NIGHT

KOWALSKI cuts off the ignition but does not get out. As the only concession to the game, he lowers the window on the passenger's side. Then he sits at the wheel, quietly smoking while listening to the radio.

Stevie Wonder is singing.

It is the BLONDE who has to leave her car to come over. She is a big blonde and a born exhibitionist. She puts her beautiful head through the window, smiling.

KOWALSKI
I couldn't miss it.

He re-starts the engine.

BLONDE
(mock-amazement)
Don't you ever get out of that car?

KOWALSKI
Occasionally.

BOY
(laughing)
Well - do you mind if I get in?

KOWALSKI takes a look at his watch, shrugs and then, pointedly, looking at her hand on the door-catch --

KOWALSKI
It's open.

She is getting in, almost coyly. He switches off the engine.

TWO SHOT INT. GALAXIE

KOWALSKI is momentarily silent.

BLONDE
(suggestively)
May I?

She puts her hand out towards him to reach for his cigarette. But for a fraction of a second it looks like something else.

KOWALSKI
Sure.

She smokes for a moment, then gives the cigarette back to KOWALSKI.

As he takes it, his rugged hand covers her long beautifully manicured fingers. But she does not release the cigarette and abruptly he lifts both her hand and the cigarette towards his mouth. They look hard into each other's eyes. Over the radio Lennon and McCartney are singing.

LENNON - MCCARTNEY (V.O.)
Why don't we do it in the road? No-
one will be watching us. Why don't
we do it inthe raod?

CLOSE UP THE GIRL

But there is a hint of genuine shyness in the girl's face.

CUT TO:

EXT. GALAXIE NIGHT

The windows are misty. Two people are making love in the car. Music and haze shroud them.

CUT TO:

INT. GALAXIE NIGHT

Some time later. But instead of pleasure we see frustration in the girl's face. She does not enjoy sex after all.

BLONDE
(between her teeth)
Stop it!

KOWALSKI
(gruffly)
What happened?

BLONDE
(biting her lip)
Nothing. That's the point -
nothing can happen!

He leans over her, brushing her mouth with his own, his torso forcing her down into the seat. She finally gives up.

EXT. GALAXIE NIGHT

Music is pouring out of the car.

Muddy Waters is singing the blues - I got my mojo workin'

The CAMERA TRACKS until we see the Galaxie and the Parisienne in the same SHOT. On the road in the background an occasional car passes by. Then the CAMERA PANS UP to the desert sky as it begins to turn a pale rose colour.

CUT TO:

INT. GALAXIE NIGHT

The BLONDE recoils from KOWALSKI with some inborn horror.

BLONDE
(defeated)
I'm - s-sorry.

KOWALSKI
(resigned)
O.K.

BOY
I really am sorry.

KOWALSKI
I told you it's O.K. You should
feel sorry for yourself!

She begins to laugh - hardly at all.

BLONDE
Why should I?

KOWALSKI lights a cigarette.

BLONDE (CONT'D)
I was born that way. I just feel
nothing.
(she looks at her nails)
See, like this.
(she claws at herself)
See?

KOWALSKI nods, sadly. Or is he indifferent?

Then --

-- sudden sunlight slips over the edge of the prairie and
into the car. KOWALSKI starts up, struck by the light. He
looks at the sun, then at his watch.

KOWALSKI
Fuck it!

BLONDE
What?

KOWALSKI
Sorry, baby, but here's where you
get off.

BOY
Now?

KOWALSKI
Yes. Now!

He begins to pick up some of the girl's clothes and leans across to open the door. He is very firm about this.

BLONDE
(protesting)
I can't get out like this, naked!

KOWALSKI
Yes, you can.

He flings the door open.

BOY
But, wait ...!

KOWALSKI
Like the man said -
(parodying Lee Marvin)
I haven't got the time, lady!

Reluctantly, the BLONDE gets out. KOWALSKI is starting the car, when he finds her panties wrapped round the steering-rod. He tosses them out to her.

KOWALSKI (CONT'D)
This must be yours.

EXT. GALAXIE (FAVOURING BLONDE) DAWN

She catches her undergarment and is about to run to her car, shielding her naked body with her rumpled clothes, - almost as if she were re-enacting the famous virgin's stance in 'September Morn'. KOWALSKI has to smile at this sorry sight.

BLONDE
(already nostalgic)
When do I get to see you again?

Pointedly, KOWALSKI does not answer.

BLONDE (CONT'D)
Come and see me sometime in Vegas.
I work at the -

But KOWALSKI is already on the highway, his car roaring away. The CAMERA HOLDS on the BLONDE. She looks for a moment at the vanishing Galaxie, then trots along to her car. She looks as lonely as hell.

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

The Galaxie speeding on, trying to beat the rising sun.

TIME-SPACE CONTINUUM -- MONTAGE (SPECIAL EFFECTS)

The car is suspended between earth and sky, as if riding on a sunbeam. It passes a big sign seemingly hanging from a cloud.

WELCOME TO UTAH!

THE MORMON STATE

Another isolated sign appears moving towards CAMERA in the opposite direction.

YOU ARE NOW LEAVING

THE STATE OF COLORADO

-- WE LOOK FORWARD TO

SEEING YOU AGAIN.

(Of course, the Galaxie is going "through the looking-glass". In "real life" you cannot possibly enter Utah before leaving the state of Colorado. But the intention is to indicate that KOWALSKI is crossing the threshold of space and going beyond the time barrier through the invisible door of memory.)

A final "suspended" sign appears, slowly:

"COME WEST, YOUNG MAN"

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

Suddenly, from behind an innocuous billboard - "Drink FANTA! Make an instant oasis of any desert!" -- out comes a speed cop on his motor-cycle, who starts chasing the Galaxie.

EXT. GALAXIE AND HIGHWAY DAY

The car is now crossing in front of a very small sign. The CAMERA ZOOMS IN so we can read it --

Speed checked by radar

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI looks into his rear-view mirror.

KOWALSKI'S POV (THROUGH REAR-VIEW MIRROR)

The speed cop on his motor-cycle.

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

The car gives a jolt to speed up.

EXT. MOTORCYCLE DAY

The speed cop riding fast.

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

The car moves even faster.

EXT. MOTORCYCLE DAY

The speed cop turns his siren on.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI smiles and injects more gas into the engine.

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

Without even turning his head, KOWALSKI waves good-bye to the speed cop. The CAMERA PANS so we can see he has been left way behind.

Between the almost blurred Galaxie and the motor-cycle bringing up the rear, comes a final real billboard. It is very big but as the CAMERA CLOSES IN on it, the sign becomes a mammoth ad. --

VISIT DINOSAUR. NOW.

(Nat'l. Mon.)

The CAMERA KEEPS ON DOLLYING IN until a single word FILLS THE SCREEN ---

DINOSAUR

EXT. DOWNTOWN RENO MORNING

A dog is leading a blind man down a sleepy street. The man is young and handsome - in a Spanish American way. He has long black wavy hair, Phantom sunglasses and very bright hippie clothes.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET (DOWNTOWN RENO) MORNING

Man and dog move easily along sidewalks, crossing streets and dealing with curbs and steps as if they have negotiated all of this route many times before.

Some early-risers say "good morning" to him, pat the dog, etc. People seem to know them well and like them. The blind man smiles and is civil and well-mannered as most blind men are.

EXT. BUIDING MORNING

The man and the dog arrive at a big building with an enormous neon sign on the facade, not yet switched off -- KOW RADIO STATION.

EXT. ENTRANCE MORNING

The doorman greets the blind man, opening the door for him. The CAMERA FOLLOWS him into the building and towards the elevator. The receptionist and the elevator-boy greet the blind man, who ad libs an in-joke.

INT. RADIO STATION CORRIDORS DAY

The blind man and his dog leave the elevator and go across a hall and through a doorway with signs, lights and notices atop indicating it is a broadcasting studio.

INT. ANTE-ROOM DAY

After patting the dog on the head, the blind man makes him sit and wait. Then he opens another door and through glass panels we see him sneaking very quietly and carefully into the inner sanctum of the studio, to sit at the speaker's table.

BIG CLOSE UP BRAILLE WATCH

A finger runs over the naked watch-face carefully, almost lovingly.

The CAMERA PULLS BACK to a CLOSE UP of the blind man as he nods to himself approvingly. The he fingers a special footage monitor on a tape recorder, gropes for the microphone, puts on earphones and finally makes a sign to the control cabin in the background. He is ready to broadcast.

VOICE (OVER INTERCOM)
Ten seconds to zero, Super.

Over the glass-panel the signal-light goes from green to red and a buzzer whizzes piercingly.

ANNOUNCER (OFF)
Ladies and gentlemen...
(echo chamber)

We give you - super Spic!

At this cue the blind man undergoes a sea-change. All of a sudden he becomes a bouncy, loud, colourful D, full of sound and fury, signifying music.

SUPER SPIC
GOOD MORNIN' folks!! This - is -
Yours Truly -- SUPER SPIC!!!

CUT TO:

INT. GALAXIE DAY

SUPER SPIC ends his tirade over the car's radio.

SUPER SPIC (V.O.) (CONT.)

... direct and live, early people,
... transmitting from KOW, K-O-W --
the noisiest, bounciest, FANciest
radio-station in the Far West ...!

While KOLOWSKI is staring doggedly at the road ahead, the CAMERA PANS to the rear-view mirror - where we see the blurred figure of a speed cop on his motor-cycle coming towards the Galaxie. The CAMERA PANS BACK to KOWALSKI, who is not aware of his pursuer. Next the CAMERA PANS to the mirror again and alongside the first speed cop there appears a second motor-cycle, stealthily approaching.

EXT. GALAXIE AND MOTOR CYCLES DAY

The FIRST COP is drawing closer.

Sonny and Cher are intoning --

SONY AND CHER (V.O.)
I got you baby. I got you.

The SECOND COP moves his bike to the right of the car - while the FIRST COP rides up almost level with KOWALSKI.

SONNY (V.O.)
I got you!

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI is still unaware when in the background a motor-cycle is trying to overtake the Galaxie and the FIRST COP frantically motions him to stop.

SOUND: A siren OFF.

KOWALSKI is startled - but only for a moment. He looks around and instantly steps on the gas pedal.

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

The car shoots off and in seconds is going at 120 m.p.h.

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

The two motor-cycles being left behind.

CHER (V.O.)
I got, baby! I go you!

FULL SHOT FIRST COP

He is not at all discouraged and chases the Galaxie.

FULL SHOT SECOND COP

- who has no choice but to follow suit.

FULL SHOT KOWALSKI

Smiling mischievously, he changes gear.

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

The Galaxie slowing down as if allowing its pursuers to come closer.

The motor-cycles come closer. When they are almost on top of the car, it soars away - playing cat and mouse in reverse.

FULL SHOT FIRST COP

Vexed, he accelerates, then veers right abruptly. He is foolishly trying to move up on the inside.

FULL SHOT GALAXIE

Realizing the manoeuvre, KOWALSKI has only to steer right and left --

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

-- rock the Galaxie right and left until the FIRST COP is riding first along the curb, then skidding on to the gravel, finally falling off with a shriek as his bike roars away.

The SECOND COP has no time to dodge the riderless motor-cycle skidding back onto the highway, so he bumps against its rear wheel and - losing control - is thrown in a heap --

TWO SHOT TWO COPS

-- on top of the FIRST COP, both men being caught in a tangle of crash-helmets, goggles exhaust fumes and grit, the wheels of their bikes spinning wildly where they have fallen, further on.

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

Watching the scene in the mirror for a moment, amused by it, he turns to look over his shoulder and his expression alters considerably.

QUICK FLASHBACK -- BACK PROJECTION

Six or seven motor-cycles racing along a steep speedway.

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

A bewildered KOWASLKI looks ahead --

KOWLASKI'S POV -- BACK PROJECTION

-- to see several other riders speeding in front of him. He is in fact riding behind them.

EXT. SPEEDWAY DAY

We are on a California steeply banked bowl-shaped speedway -- several years before. A half-mile race is going on at a furious pace. Motor-cycles are roaring by at incredible speed.

FULL SHOT RIDER -- (BACK PROJECTION)

It is KOWALSKI, goggled and helmeted like the rest, riding a powerful Harley Davidson 74 with great flair. He is younger, untouched by life. His panache and expertise mark him as some kind of demi-god - a modern centaur.

EXT. SPEEDWAY -- (BACK PROJECTION) DAY

KOWALSKI has now only two riders in front of him. He speeds on and overtakes first one, then the other.

ON SOUND: The crowd roaring in weird crescendo.

INSERT -- WHEELS

The rear wheel of KOWALSKI's bike being accidentally snared by the second rider's machine.

EXT. SPEEDWAY DAY

Three, the five motor-cycles going down in a terrible pile-up. Bodies are seen hurled across the speedway, hit by other motor-cycles in mid-air and crash-landing against the railings.

ON SOUND: When the bang of the crash and the whimper of the crowd subside, we can hear the wind flapping against the banner flying on top of the stands.

One of the crashed riders is obviously dead. Two more are very badly hurt. Some get up by themselves. Men in white appear carrying stretchers, collecting the dead and the wounded from the track.

The CAMERA ZOOMS IN ON KOWALSKI, seen limping towards his motor-cycle, easing it upright, inspecting it carefully and readying himself to mount again. Now coolly awaiting the judge's signal to re-start, he has not even bothered to cast a glance at the fallen.

ANNOUNCER (OFF)

(over PA system)

Looks as if number 44 is unhurt...

His bike seems ready to go again...

Yes, Kowalski, number 44 already on his mark!

ON SOUND: The announcement's echo reverberates over the next SHOT.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY (UTAH) DAY

KOWALSKI has stopped his car and is sticking his head out, to see how the fallen cops are doing.

KOWALSKI'S POV

The SECOND COP is standing up and going over to his colleague, who is lying unconscious. The FIRST COP gets to his feet, with some help from his friend. FIRST COP limping, SECOND COP dusting himself off, they both come towards their motor-cycles, which seem to be utterly wrecked. The TWO COPS rage at --

INT. GALAXIE DAY

-- KOWALSKI, who smiles, ignites his engine and drives away.

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

First the car goes calmly, almost quietly, then it is cruising at more than 90 m.p.h.

INT. BROADCASTING STUDIO DAY

Where SUPER SPIC is doing his thing.

SUPER SPIC
... and NOW!!! Crashing into --
the TOP TENNN!!! ... Comes the
FIRST really MONSTROUS HIT!! Of
sixty-nine...
(echo chamber: 69-69-69)
The number that all by itself
JUMPED! 29 (TWENTY NINE!!) Places
in ONE WEEK!!! There is absolutely
no doubt whatsoever - as they say -
that this will be ...

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI driving and the radio broadcasting.

SUPER SPIC (V.O.) (CONT.)
... next WEEK'S number ONE1 --
NUMERO UNO!! -- the itchy BANG!! --
entitled "Where d'you go from here,
baby?" by - - Brian O'BRIAN!!!
Sock it to 'em, Brian Babyyyy !!!

The tune starts in the Galaxie and continues over --

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

-- the TWO COPS riding tandem on a pinking and crotchety machine.

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI takes two more pills from his shirt pocket and swallows them quickly, in his usual "dry" manner. He then looks at the rear-view mirror. It is somewhat slanted. He puts out his hand to set it right.

VERY QUICK FLASHBACK

KOWALSKI adjusting the rear-view mirror in a squad car. He is dressed as a city policeman on duty.

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI IN THE GALAXIE

He instantly withdraws his hand as if the mirror has burnt his fingers.

SILENT SEQUENCE

EXT. CURB DAY

The much battered motor-cycle is drawn up by an HP communication-box. The FIRST COP is talking on the phone, while the SECOND COP leans against the booth, nodding approvingly at the FIRST COP's every word. We do not hear the conversation but they both look pretty sore.

INT. UTAH'S HIGHWAY PATROL HEADQUARTERS DAY

A policemen at the desk is listening attentively over the phone and taking notes. He then hands them to another policeman seated at a MWT console. The latter reads the notes over the microphone.

BIG CLOSE UP CAR PLATE

It obviously belongs to the GALAXIE. The CAMERA ZOOMS BACK and the car is speeding along US Route 40, a more crowded road now. The CAMERA ZOOMS BACK MORE until we see two patrol cars halted on the side of the road, in foreground. Standing beside their vehicles, two patrolmen are thoroughly checking every passing car.

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

As it approaches the checkpoint.

EXT. CURB DAY

Wearing black gloves and Calobar sunglasses, the patrolmen look as ominous as they are vigilant.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI, aiming for a getaway, daringly changes lanes and dashes ahead at breakneck speed.

EXT. CURB AND HIGHWAY DAY

The two patrolmen as they discover KOWALSKI contravening every traffic regulation. We see one of them shout --

That's him over there!

-- without hearing the words. They both jump into their respective cars, which are already shooting off launched on a wild chase along the crowded freeway.

SILENT SEQUENCE ENDS

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

The Galaxie swerving left and right among cars.

SOUND: Loud song, car noises.

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

Dodging another car's fender in the nick of time.

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

The Galaxie veering right and left.

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI avoiding a collision at the very last minute by changing lanes with an almost physically impossible sideway jump, as if the Galaxie were a racing car.

QUICK CLOSE SHOTS

1 -)

2 -) -----Concerned drivers' individual reactions.

3 -)

EXT. VERGE DAY

The Galaxie roaring over the verge on three / two wheels.

FULL SHOT GALAXIE

Hitting the hard shoulder.

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

The car bouncing up in the air and taking off, virtually flying.

EXT. CURB DAY

Galaxie careening across one side of the road to plow deeply into the dirt.

ANOTHER ANGLE GALAXIE

Grinding into a dusty skid right on the brink of the ditch.

INSERT CLOSE SHOT WHEEL

Tyre spinning madly in the air.

ANOTHER ANGLE GALAXIE

Grinding into a dusty skid right on the brink of the ditch.

INSERT CLOSE SHOT WHEEL

Tyre spinning madly in the air.

ANOTHER ANGLE GALAXIE

Performing a gravelling re-entry manoeuvre along the curb.

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

The Galaxie hurtling back onto the freeway, scraping a long pale scar on the road surface.

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

The car levelling in time to sidetrack a Cadillac --

EXT. CARS (HIGH ANGLE SHOT) DAY

-- only to fall trapped between a scared Mustang and a stubborn Rambler convertible.

QUICK CLOSE SHOTS

1 -) --- Concerned driver's reaction as described (scared / stubborn)

2 -)

EXT. BEND DAY

The Galaxie freeing itself of its forced company by sheer horse-power and KOWALSKI's gall as he takes a curve with fantastic inward lean.

INSERT ROLLING TYRES

Cutting flat grooves in the soft greasy tarmac.

SPECIAL DETAIL SHOT CAR BODY

Being detached, literally prised from chassis by the pull of centrifugal force.

REVERSE SPECIAL DETAIL SHOT CAR BODY

Being thrust back into one solid piece by the drive of the opposite (centripetal) force.

FULL SHOT (STUNT) CAR

Flying propelled by its own impetus, then landing safely.

LOW ANGLE SHOT GALAXIE

Levelling finally on all four wheels.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI turning to look back.

KOWALSKI'S POV

The two patrol cars are still chasing him.

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

The Galaxie accelerates even more and the patrol cars begin to fall back.

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

Turning his attention to the road, smiling. Then checking himself.

EXT. ROAD AHEAD DAY

Out of nowhere, a red Lotus Elan obstructs his path.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI, concerned.

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

The Galaxie speeding up. But the Lotus Elan manages to level with it.

MEDIUM SHOT KOWALSKI

Turning briefly to look in the direction of the Lotus.

CLOSE UP DRIVER IN LOTUS

A speed freak with a half-demented, half-mawkish smile glaring at KOWALSKI. With a fiendish face, his is challenging KOWALSKI to a race.

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

Who accepts.

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

The two cars, racing each other.

FULL SHOT KOWALSKI

Elated, stepping hard on the accelerator.

EXT. LOTUS DAY

The rival car follows suit.

INT. LOTUS DAY

SPEED FREAK cackling madly.

EXT. CURVE DAY

The Galaxie swooping into it --

REVERSE SHOT

-- then coming out of the curve almost sideways.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI turns.

KOWALSKI's POV.

The Lotus right behind him, riding perversely.

TWO SHOT CARS

The Lotus levelling with the Galaxie, then overtaking.

EXT. CURVE DAY

The Lotus taking the curve ahead of the Galaxie.

INT. LOTUS DAY

SPEED FREAK as he looks into his mirror and then looks away, nervously.

INSERT REAR-VIEW MIRROR

KOWALSKI, so close behind that we can see his face clearly - and the dead-serious stare he has.

CLOSE UP SPEED FREAK

Uneasy with those eyes in the mirror.

EXT. GALAXIE (FRONT VIEW) DAY

KOWALSKI staring dead ahead. Suddenly his face is faded out by the sun striking the windshield directly.

SPECIAL SHOTS

Sunlight fiercely bursting out all over.

- 1 - Off windshields
- 2 - Flaring on the chromium
- 3 - Firing the enamel.

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

The Lotus well ahead and diving into another big bend.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI jerking his steering-wheel to the left and locking it. A blinding tornado of reflections, fumes and speed comes through the windshield.

EXT. BIG BEND DAY

The Galaxie reaching the curve with a sideways sweep, the car thrown into a skid by --

INT. GALAXIE DAY

-- KOWALSKI, with a wheel still locked. Instead of braking the car he steps on the gas pedal without changing gears.

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

Picking up speed again halfway through the loop, power sliding right behind the Lotus.

TWO SHOTS THE CARS

The Galaxie outdriving the Lotus and coming out first.

INT. LOTUS DAY

SPEED FREAK, vexed at KOWALSKI's trick, drives madly straight for the Galaxie.

INSERT FENDERS

The Lotus banging the Galaxie's rear fender.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

The car shaking with the impact.

ON SOUND: loud banging

QUICK FLASHBACK

EXT. STOCK-CAR RACE DAY

Stock cars on a speedway.

EXT. SPEEDWAY DAY

A stock car taking a bend too wide, banking up on the outside track as another car comes up on the inside and hits rear fender, sending the car into a wild spin, then out on a flying leap to hit the guardrail and end by being cannoned up into the stands.

EXT. STANDS DAY

The overturned, smoking debris of the car among heaps of maimed spectators and a horrified, fleeing crowd.

FULL SHOT STOCK-CAR DRIVER

Upside down, his bleeding torso hangs from the seat-straps like newly slaughtered beef on the meat-rack.

CLOSE UP DRIVER

It is KOWALSKI

CUT TO:

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI returning from his nightmare as the Lotus bangs once more against his car.

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

The Galaxie trying to get away from the Lotus, which is insanely banging against it.

INSERT TYPE

Blowing out dangerously.

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

It is the SPEED FREAK who has had the blow-out and his car is spun into the ditch, overturning wildly several times before lying motionless in the dusty fields.

ULTRA-QUICK FLASHBACK

EXT. STOCK-CAR RACE STANDS DAY

KOWALSKI hanging limply amidst the wreckage and the gore.

EXT. GALAXIE (UTAH HIGHWAY) DAY

KOWALSKI slowing down, as he turns to look at the accident very much concerned.

EXT. FIELDS DAY

The SPEED FREAK getting out of his wrecked Lotus, unscarred but scared.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI, grinning, ready to get away when --

ON SOUND: Sirens are suddenly turned on.

EXT. HIGHWAY (THROUGH REAR-WINDOW) DAY

The patrol cars very close behind the Galaxie.

EXT. GALAXIE AND PATROL CARS DAY

Enacting a very stiff chase.

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

Cars stopping here and there at the edge of the highway, on the spot, everywhere they can, to let the patrol cars go tearing through.

EXT. CURB DAY

Some passengers have even got out to watch.

EXT. HIGHWAY (FROM CURB) DAY

As the highway snakes through wide open bends, the chase becomes something of a cross-country rally.

EXT. BENDS DAY

The show is almost over - KOWALSKI seems to be losing.

EXT. HIGHWAY (THROUGH WINDSHIELD) DAY

Coming out of a narrow bend, the highway opens into a good stretch of straight road. KOWALSKI plunges for it.

EXT. HIGHWAY AND CARS DAY

But the patrol cars keep up their pace all the same.

EXT. SECOND PATROL CAR DAY

Braking sharply, it pulls into the curb, then flashes its lights at the other patrol car, though nothing seems to be mechanically wrong with it.

EXT. FIRST PATROL CAR DAY

The FIRST PATROLMAN notices the flashlight and stops brusquely too.

INT. SECOND PATROL CAR DAY

The SECOND PATROLMAN calls attention to something at the side of the road.

EXT. FIRST PATROL CAR DAY

The FIRST PATROLMAN pokes his head out of the window to look back. Then he nods and begins to back up along the curb. The CAMERA FOLLOWS him. In the other car the SECOND PATROLMAN is talking over the radio, informing HQ. It is obvious that they have called the chase off. The CAMERA PANS and we see why. A sign by the road slows they have come to the state boundary with Nevada.

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

The Galaxie speeding away.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI peers into his rear-view mirror. He cannot locate the patrol cars any more. When he realized this he starts to tremble with excitement. So much so that he has to slow down.

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

The car coming to a halt and stopping at the side of the road.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

When he turns the ignition off his hands are still shaking badly. For the first time in the FILM, we begin to see KOWALSKI as a trapped animal. To calm himself he lights a cigarette, smoking avidly. Then he turns on the radio. We hear the familiar voice.

SUPER SPIC (V.O.)

... I listen for my footsteps, you listen for your footsteps, he and / or she and even it listen for their own footsteps too -- AND -- they don't hear them -- BUT -- guess who? What? Is coming when? - where? How? YES! -- it's -- the BEADLES!! With their number five - take that - in the charts -----

MUSIC starts but the bantering does on over it.

LONG SHOT GALAXIE

The highway is in FOREGROUND. A few cars go past. The Nevade landscape is in the BACKGROUND.

ON SOUND: the music - poignant, sarcastic. Over this SHOT we print the following caption:

Somewhere in Nevada

11:30am Saturday

INT. COMMUNICATIONS ROOM NEVADA STATE HIGHWAY PATROL HQ DAY

Different decor but somewhat similar setup to that in Utah. An officer is talking over the police frequency on the FM band. As the OFFICER talks the CAMERA PANS AROUND the room. We see wanted posters very much as in the old days.

OFFICER
(chewing gum)
... Yeah, I got it - four three
eight two times nice two times
five, Denver plates.
(listening pause)
Now, exaskly what's this roadrunner
done, fellers?
(pause)
Yeah.
(pause)
Yeah? Yeah!
(pause)
Is that all? ... Yeah, quite a
mother - but - well, fellers as you
know, all we can throw at him is
dangerous driving and failing to
stop. Statutory offences, both of
them over here ... Yeah.
(pause)
You told me all that before
camarado. But has this bronco in
the Lotus made a formal complaint?
(pause)
Well, there you see. That's not
even a felony, brother.
(pause)
Yeah, sure.
(pause)
Well, we're not bugged any. He's
the one who's gonna be worrying as
of now ... Yeah, don't you worry,
we'll catch him ...

The CAMERA STOPS right in front of a poster with a harsh
inducement in bold lettering --- DEAD OR ALIVE!!

INT. RADIO STUDIO DAY

SUPER SPIC is having his morning break, quietly eating
tortillas with his coffee.

ON SOUND: ads and music over the monitors. Pre-recorded
stuff.

In the BACKGROUND we see the control room and the engineer dealing with the broadcast like a technical octopus.

INSERT GAS METER

Nearly empty.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI is so worried about it that he taps the gas meter to double-check. He begins to look for a gas station. He sees none. Not even a sign. He keeps on searching.

INT. CONTROL ROOM (RADIO STATION) DAY

The ENGINEER is fiddling with knobs and dials when he suddenly 'freezes.' He listens attentively. Then finely tunes into an outside station by fingering more knobs. He speedily plugs in a tape recorder while opening the loudspeaker to the studio.

ENGINEER

Hey, Supe ...

INT. STUDIO DAY

ENGINEER (OFF)

... Them is back on the air.

That is all he says. SUPER SPIC stops eating and quickly dons an extra set of earphones. Blue earphones. He listens to them in a trance, as if actually seeing the words in his darkness. He pushes away the snack-tray and snaps his fingers for someone - the elevator boy - to collect it.

EXT. SERVICE STATION DAY

The Galaxie pulling into a service station attended by girls wearing very short shorts, Las Vegas-style.

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI turns off the engine and the radio both. A lovely redhead comes over to his car.

FIRST REDHEAD

Can I help you, sir?

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

Reacting to the girl with the utmost surprise.

FEMININE VOICE (OFF)
Can I help you, sir?

KOWALSKI's POV

It is another redhead girl attendant. She is as attractive as FIRST REDHEAD but her hairdo is definitely of the fifties, so is her make-up. Also she is wearing tight-fitting pants instead of shorts.

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

He looks at the girl and turns - as the CAMERA PANS OVER with his gaze - to his own past life as it was five years ago. There is a corporal of the San Francisco police force seated beside him. He is busy looking for something in the glove compartment. His name is ONOFRIO. He has finished his search.

CORP ONOFRIO
(to CAMERA)
Wait here. I won't be a minute.

He steps out of the car.

EXT. CAR (FIVE YEARS AGO) DAY

But ONOFRIO gets out of a squad car not the Galaxie. In the BACKGROUND we see KOWALSKI, dressed as a city policeman too, sitting at the wheel.

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI (FIVE YEARS AGO)

He is younger, his hair cut short. Once more he looks at the girl attendant.

KOWALSKI's POV (PRESENT)

The FIRST REDHEAD is wiping the windshield very thoroughly. She notices KOWALSKI's stare and smiles at him pertly.

INT. GALAXIE (THROUGH WINDSHIELD) DAY

It is the present day KOWALSKI, who does not smile back. But as CAMERA DOLLIES BACK to GO INTO the car, IT SHOWS in the BACKGROUND a totally different service station. In the FOREGROUND the girl now wiping the windshield is SECOND REDHEAD. Inside the Galaxie, KOWALSKI is again dressed as a city policeman. He looks OFF.

EXT. SERVICE STATION (FIVE YEARS AGO) DAY

CORPOREAL ONOFRIO is talking to a very strong but effeminate-looking man wearing a blond wig -- or is it a bull-dike? He finishes and comes back to the car.

EXT. GALAXIE (PRESENT) DAY

CORPOREAL ONOFRIO gets in the car.

CORP ONOFRIO

Let's go.

KOWALSKI starts the Galaxie and begins to move out. SECOND REDHEAD steps back and smiles at KOWALSKI. For a moment the girl is blocked by the car-body, but as it drives away, it is the FIRST REDHEAD who is staring at the departing Galaxie. The CAMERA PANS in the direction of her eyeline and we see the squad car leaving a service station in a city - five years ago.

EXT. STREETS (SAN FRANCISCO - FIVE YEARS AGO) DAY

The squad car moving along crowded streets.

INT. SQUAD CAR (BACK PROJECTION) DAY

CORPORAL ONOFRIO shows KOWALSKI a bundle of ten-dollar bills.

CORP ONOFRIO

Good American money. Half of it ours.

KOWALSKI

What?

CORP ONOFRIO

You heard what I said.

They stop for some pedestrians to cross the zebra zone.

KOWALSKI

What was that exactly, Onofrio?

CORP ONOFRIO

(smiling knowingly)

Call it your first lesson in criminology, kid.

KOWALSKI starts up the car rudely.

KOWALSKI
Come on, straight!

CORP ONOFRIO
I'm not kidding. But if you're referring to that joint back there I can tell you this - if that was a gas station then I'm Benito Mussolini.

CORPORAL ONOFRIO laughs boisterously. But he goes on cynically and in earnest --

CORP ONOFRIO (CONT'D)
Come on - d'you really believe those girls are 'servicing' cars only?

KOWALSKI
Are they call girls?

CHER
Kid, you have just been in the first - I'd guess it's the first - drive-in bordello.

KOWALSKI looks at ONOFRIO wondering if he's kidding. He decides he is not.

KOWALSKI
Then, why didn't we raid it?

CORPORAL ONOFRIO chuckles. Then makes a number 2 sign with his middle finger and forefinger.

CORP ONOFRIO
Lesson number two, officer Kowalski. When you begin raiding every brothel in town, you finish by raiding your own brothel. That's called self-destruction in my book.

KOWALSKI is sullenly silent. ONOFRIO looks at him.

CORP ONOFRIO (CONT'D)
I bet you're thinking you shouldn't of left of being a flatfoot. But on that beat you were on you'd of finished by drinking rootbeer because it's free and letting retailers stuff your shift pocket with crummy cheroots. Puah!

With a blowing sound he dissipates such vistas.

KOWALSKI
(getting angry)
I'm going to tell you right now how
I was doing on that beat --

CORP ONOFRIO
(interrupting)
No, you're not, for here's where I
get off. That's my car over there
...

EXT. STREET (BACK PROJECTION) DAY

He points at a magnificent latest model Chevrolet seen
through the windshield.

INT. SQUAD CAR DAY

KOWALSKI pulls up next to the glowing new car. He tries for
once to be sarcastic.

KOWALSKI
That's what the country needs --
more enterprising young men!

But ONOFRIO must have the last word. He produces a cigar and
takes his time lighting it.

CORP ONOFRIO
What this country needs - as my
favourite vice president once said -
is a good five cent cigar!

ONOFRIO is getting out - but only after leaving a few ten-
dollar bills behind him.

CORP ONOFRIO (CONT'D)
There's your bonus, pard. Don't
let it rust. See you tomorrow!

KOWALSKI
Aye, aye, sir!

KOWALSKI waits for CORPORAL ONOFRIO to go. He is even more
sullen now.

EXT. STREET (BACK PROJECTION) DAY

We see CORPORAL ONOFRIO getting into his Chevrolet and pulling out smoothly. He waves a happy good-bye at KOWALSKI.

INT. SQUAD CAR (BACK PROJECTION) DAY

A depressed and moody KOWALSKI drives on towards a busy avenue. He stops at traffic lights, looks at the money beside him, picks it up - and for no apparent reason turns his siren on, picks up at full throttle, swings into a 90-degree turn and shoots along the avenue crossing every street whether the lights be red or green.

EXT. STREET (BACK PROJECTION) DAY

The squad car dashing from one end of the city to the other at 90 m.p.h., creating havoc and disorder.

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

Driving furiously, dangerously - with no concern at all for the consequences.

EXT. CITY OUTSKIRTS DAY

The squad car speeding along an avenue leading to the outskirts of San Francisco.

INT. SQUAD CAR DAY

Speed seems to disintoxicate the driver's soul.

EXT. UNDERPASS DAY

The squad car goes into a steep underpass.

INT. CAR AT ENTRANCE (BACK PROJECTION) DAY

KOWALSKI the policeman, driving assuredly. He is still an angry young man.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR IN UNDERPASS (BACK PROJECTION) DAY

An older KOWALSKI. Still a policeman but a milder man.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR AT EXIT (BACK PROJECTION) DAY

KOWALSKI, much older and wearing civilian clothes. He looks happier now, free.

EXT. CAR COMING FROM UNDERPASS DAY

The squad car has been transformed into a Buick which is going onto an overpass. KOWALSKI is driving it.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

From the overpass and onto the highway descends a black Farina Cadillac, driven by KOWALSKI.

CUT TO:

EXT. NATIONAL HIGHWAY DAY

The Galaxie driving along a Utah section of US Route 40.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI looking exactly as he was at the beginning of the FILM, driving and smoking and listening to the radio.

But somehow the landscape has changed.

SPECIAL EFFECTS SEQUENCE

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

The road seems wider, more cambered. Unfamiliar trees alongside it have turned purple and grown into fantastic shapes.

EXT. FIELDS AND SKY DAY

The sky is a black dome where orange-tinted clouds loom menacingly over a tilted horizon.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI is a spectral driver in a phantom car.

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

Suddenly, the ghosts of two patrol cars are chasing after a dream-Galaxie at weird speeds.

SUPER SPIC (V.O.)
 ... and there goes the Galaxie
 being chased by the Glue-Blue
 Meanies on Wheels!!!! The vicious
 traffic squad cars are after our
 Lone Driver, the Last American
 Hero, the electric centaur, the
 demi-god, the SUPER-DRIVER OF THE
 GOLDEN WEST...

(We see fragments of the CAR CHASE SEQUENCE again but distorted by the eyeless imagination of SUPER SPIC, who narrates his saga with the imagery of a blind child. Through his adult's perceptions plus his electronic information, SUPER SPIC experiences the real chase as an audio-tactile nightmare - rendered by SPECIAL LAB EFFECTS.)

SUPER SPIC (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 ... Two Nasty-Nazi cars are close
 behind the BEAUTIFUL Lone Rider.
 The police numbers are getting
 closer, closer, CLOSER! to our Soul-
 Hero in his Soul-mobile! They are
 about to strike, they're gonna get
 him... smash him.. RAPE! the last
 beautiful FREE soul on this planet
 EARTH!!!

SPECIAL EFFECTS SEQUENCE ENDS

INT. BROADCASTING STUDIO DAY

SUPER SPIC in busy enacting the car chase,

SUPER SPIC
 (Hindu accent)
 ... But -- it is written --
 (MORE)

SUPER SPIC (CONT'D)

(mock-quoting)

"If the Evil Spirit arm the Tiger
with claws, Braham provideth wings
for the Dove!" Thus spake the
Super Guru!

(DJ's bantering)

And -- it is true, true, TRUE!!!
for by the latest information our
Soul-Galaxie has just broken the
ring of evil the Deep Blue --

CUT TO:

INT. PATROL CAR ON A NEVADA HIGHWAY DAY

A young policeman is listening to his portable transistor
tuned to Station KOW.

SUPER SPIC (V.O.)

-- Blue Meanies have so righteously
wrought --

The YOUNG PATROLMAN turns to his colleague, an older
patrolman who is driving.

YOUNG PATROLMAN

(vexed)

Did you hear that?

OLD PATROLMAN

(routinely)

Yes I did.

YOUNG PATROLMAN

Where the hell does he get so much
inside info?

The OLD PATROLMAN has to explain to the YOUNG PATROLMANS the
facts of life (in the police force).

OLD PATROLMAN

Same source as yours.

YOUNG PATROLMAN

You mean from our own frequency?

OLD PATROLMAN

Yep.

YOUNG PATROLMAN

For how long did he do this
already?

OLD PATROLMAN
 (scandalised)
 But that's against the law!

OLD PATROLMAN looks pointedly at the YOUNG PATROLMAN's radio.

OLD PATROLMAN (CONT'D)
 So's carrying a load private
 transistor while on duty-

YOUNG PATROLMAN
 (overlapping,
 interrupting)
 Oh come on!

OLD PATROLMAN
 (overlapping,
 interrupting)
 -- if somebody can prove you've
 really been doing it... See how he
 never mentions anything to
 incriminate himself?
 (he taps his head,
 overlapping ends)
 Brains, lawyers and so forth. So
 far as the law is concerned he's
 clean as Kleenex.

YOUNG PATROLMAN
 Fucking faggot!

He turns his transistor off, furiously.

EXT. SERVICE STATION DAY

The Galaxie leaving the gasoline station.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

As he hits the road, KOWALSKI automatically turns on the radio, then he looks at his watch, checking his time.

SUPER SPIC (V.O.)
 ... That was the way it was, folks.
 Telling Like It Is - or - battle of
 the Soul against the Meanies...
 Keep in tune with this station and
 we'll keep you well with-it. Don't
 miss the next chapter of our serial
 - entitled --
 (echo chamber)
 REELS FOR THE REAL!!!

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

The Galaxie rolling as relentlessly as the tape.

SUPER SPIC (V.O.)
... Coming soon! A courtesy of
yours truly and KOW, K-O-W Station,
in bountiful uptight Reno! And
now, here's your Anglo DJ! The one
an' only Wayne Montana!!! Take it
away, Wayne!!!!

As the Galaxie disappears behind the desert horizon.

INT. NEVADA HIGHWAY PATROL CAR DAY

The YOUNG PATROLMAN is visibly bored. He even yawns. Once in a while he peeps at his transistor. Mildly amused, the OLD PATROLMAN gives him sidelong looks. Suddenly --

VOICE (OVER RADIO)
Attention! Calling your 44!
Attention car 44! Do you read me?

The YOUNG PATROLMAN springs to the microphone.

YOUNG PATROLMAN
Car 44 reading you loud and clear.

VOICE (OVER RADIO)
Where are you, car 44?

YOUNG PATROLMAN
On State Route 80, around ten miles
from Argenta.

VOICE (OVER RADIO)
Good. Stay with it. Watch for a
car with license plates quote:
eight, three, four, two times nine,
two times five, Denver: unquote.
Last seen heading for Denphy on US
HIGHWAY 40 at cruising speed though
we have reason to suspect it's
super-charged. Maintain double
alert till you spot it. Then refer
to HQ for instructions. Over and
out.

The YOUNG PATROLMAN is no longer bored. He whistles in excitement.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

Fatigue is beginning to tell on KOWALSKI. The amphetamines keep him awake but he looks strained. Only the voice on the radio seems undeterred.

ON SOUND: Nina Simone sings Ain't Got No.

EXT. GALAXIE (REAR VIEW) DAY

The car seems to have the whole highway to itself. But the CAMERA ZOOMS BACK SLOWLY and see it THROUGH WINDSHIELD.

INT. PATROL CAR DAY

The patrolmen are tailing KOWALSKI very cautiously.

YOUNG PATROLMAN has just hung up the radio-telephone.

YOUNG PATROLMAN
(to Old Patrolman)
What d'you think he's done?

OLD PATROLMAN
Dunno.
(pause)
What d'you think yourself?

YOUNG PATROLMAN
Killed somebody I guess. Or else
he stole that big mother of his.
Maybe both.

OLD PATROLMAN
They'd have said so.

YOUNG PATROLMAN
Why didn't they say what he's gonna
be booked for then?

OLD PATROLMAN
Dunno.
(pause)
Probably they don't know
themselves.

YOUNG PATROLMAN
Probably.
(pause)
But then what?

OLD PATROLMAN
Beats me.

INT. COLORADO STATE HIGHWAY PATROL HQ DAY

A fat communications officer is speaking over the FM band.

FAT OFFICER
Hello Nevada.
(listening pause)
Hellow Nevada? Nevada? This is
Colorado State Highway Patrol.
(pause)
This is about a special query
raised by the Utah Highway Patrol.
(pause)

As the FAT OFFICER is talking the CAMERA DOLLIES IN SLOWLY on him. He sounds more rotund every second.

FAT OFFICER (CONT'D)
Affirmative.
(pause)
That is correct. But later they
asked for the answer to be
transferred to you guys. So ready
now for the details. Switch on
your tape recorders and all that
jazz. Here we go! Apparently the
speed-maniac you've been haring
after all over your territory is a
former professional road-racer
named Kowalski. Kilo, Oscar,
Whiskey, Alpha, Lima, Sierra, Kilo,
India. Repeat KOWALSKI. First
name unknown so far. Other
particulars, also unknown. But, we
do know he's been employed as car-
delivery driver by a Denver agency.
So if the car eh's presently
driving is a Ford Galaxie, license
plates eight three four two time
five two times nine Denver-
registered, this is not a stolen
car. He's taking it with him for
delivery to San Francisco, due
Monday.
(pause)
Negative to that.
(pause)
Well, we wanted to know that
ourselves. So your guess is as
good as ours.

In the end we are VERY CLOSE UP on his fat liver lips, his mouth chewing out the words like verbal rumination.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

The Galaxie going as fast as ever.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI slows down as he sees something on the road.

EXT. HIGHWAY (THROUGH WINDSHIELD) DAY

Two patrol cars half a mile ahead. They are going in the same direction as the Galaxie.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI is about to step on the accelerator, then restrains himself. He decides to go on driving as easily as he has been. But by chance he looks into the rear-view mirror -- and is concerned.

KOWALSKI'S POV REAR-VIEW MIRROR

A patrol car not very far behind.

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

He is suddenly aware of a trap. He drives faster and keeps an eye on the mirror.

INSERT MIRROR

The patrol car growing smaller.

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

The Galaxie is speeding up as if ready to pass the patrol cars, seen now barely 500 yards ahead.

FULL SHOT KOWALSKI

As he throws the Galaxie into second gear, grips the wheel and accelerates terrifically.

EXT. GALAXIE (STUNT SHOT) DAY

The rear end of the car is spinning around in a complete 180-degree turn. When it finishes this about turn, the Galaxie tears back up the road the same way it was coming.

NEW ANGLE GALAXIE AND PATROL CAR

KOWALSKI is heading straight for Car 44.

CLOSE UP OLD PATROLMAN

Reacting scared.

EXT. PATROL CAR AND GALAXIE DAY

Patrol car swerving off the road and skidding to a halt, as the Galaxie rolls on in the wrong direction for a few hundred yards, then crosses the verge and drives onto the right lane, without slowing at all. The CAMERA FOLLOWS the manoeuvre.

EXT. TWO PATROL CARS (REAR VIEW) DAY

The patrol cars that were preceding the Galaxie have not even noticed KOWALSKI's getaway.

INT. PATROL CAR 44 DAY

The YOUNG PATROLMAN is struggling with the OLD PATROLMAN for the steering-wheel.

YOUNG PATROLMAN
(frantically)
Let go, let me take it! Let me
take it!

He gets out of the car and dashes around to the driving seat.

YOUNG PATROLMAN (CONT'D)
(opening the door)
Get out of the way!

He forces the OLD PATROLMAN away from the seat.

YOUNG PATROLMAN (CONT'D)
I'll get him! I swear to God I'll
get him!

EXT. PATROL CAR 44 (MOVING SHOT) DAY

Without even slamming the door, the YOUNG PATROLMAN flings the car forward and shoots off after the Galaxie. Driving against traffic, almost hitting oncoming cars, crossing dangerously towards the opposite lanes and miraculously controlling the car at top speed, he manages to tear away.

INT. PATROL CAR 44 DAY

The OLD PATROLMAN, raving.

OLD PATROLMAN
(hissing)
You cunt!

But the YOUNG PATROLMAN is totally intent on the road and on the Galaxie leaping into the FAR BACKGROUND.

EXT. GALAXIE AND LATER PATROL CAR 44 DAY

A mile ahead, striking out down the highway, streaking away faster and faster. But somehow patrol car 44 hangs tenaciously on its tail

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

Seeing a way out.

EXT. HIGHWAY (THROUGH WINDSHIELD) DAY

About three quarters of a mile further along the road, a crossing.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI is looking ahead and at the same time surveying the patrol car in the rear-view mirror. He is weighing every contingency.

INT. PATROL CAR 44 DAY

The YOUNG PATROLMAN watching the Galaxie and trying to guess KOWALSKI's intentions.

YOUNG PATROLMAN'S POV

The Galaxie is nearing the crossroads. KOWALSKI is going too fast to do anything about the crossing, except perhaps to break through it.

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

But about 100 yards from the intersection, the car begins to skid.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI performing another stunt. This time instead of cocking the wheel all the way, he lets it go immediately after braking a bit, then throws the car into third gear and steps lightly on the accelerator. He taps the gas pedal twice, so that power-steering can make the unbelievable fast 90-degree turn. It is about to bank out, when KOWALSKI checks the wheel by swinging it sharply to the right, then gripping it tightly.

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

The car coming onto the secondary road like a shot.

INT. PATROL CAR 44 DAY

The OLD PATROLMAN is dumbfounded.

OLD PATROLMAN
(almost admiringly)
Look at that son of a gun.

But the YOUNG PATROLMAN is too busy braking the car, skidding over the crossing, over-riding it, stalling, fumbling with the wheel, going into second gear, making a slow half-turn, stepping too hard on the accelerator, scraping the gravel to come onto the secondary road and --

EXT. PATROL CAR 44 DAY

-- finally hitting KOWALSKI's track - 8 or 10 precious seconds too late.

EXT. SECONDARY ROAD DAY

The Galaxie is seen much farther up the road.

INT. PATROL CAR 44 DAY

The YOUNG PATROLMAN is shouting at his mate.

YOUNG PATROLMAN
(excitedly)
The radio, the radio!

The OLD PATROLMAN, groping for the mike, turns it on.

OLD PATROLMAN
(shouting over it)
Car 44 calling headquarters! Car
44 calling headquarters!

VOICE (OVER RADIO)
Come in, car 44.

OLD PATROLMAN
We lost him! We lost him!

VOICE (OVER RADIO)
WHAT!!!

YOUNG PATROLMAN snatches the microphone from the OLD PATROLMAN to talk into it.

YOUNG PATROLMAN
Correction, we're after him!
Repeat, we've still got him!

INT. NEVADA HIGHWAY PATROL HQ DAY

The COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER cannot believe his ears.

COMMO OFFICER
What the hell's going on out there,
Collins?

CROSS CUTTING -- HIGHWAY PATROL HQ AND PATROL CAR 44

The OLD PATROLMAN glares at the YOUNG PATROLMAN and deliberately takes the microphone back. He pulls himself together before answering.

OLD PATROLMAN
Well, sir, that Galaxie went into a
bootleg turn against us. We had
barely time to dive for sake, sir --

COMMO OFFICER
(interrupting)
Never mind that!
(MORE)

COMM OFFICER (CONT'D)
We know all that already. What we
want to know is -- where are you
now?

OLD PATROLMAN
Sire, we're after him --

COMM OFFICER
(exasperatedly)
But exactly where?

OLD PATROLMAN
This man Kowalski managed to get
away with a 90-degree turn on a
crossing and right now he's well on
the 8A road out of Galena,
apparently heading for Austin, sir.

COMM OFFICER
Alright, that's all we need. Keep
with him and don't lose him, no
matter what. We're coming to you
right this minute!

OLD PATROLMAN
Yessir!

He hangs up the microphone, while the YOUNG PATROLMAN
concentrates on not losing sight of the Galaxie --

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

-- though the Galaxie seems just a blur on the swift clean
line of the horizon.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI checking the road on the rear-view mirror.

INSERT MIRROR

The patrol car is not even a speck --

FULL SHOT KOWALSKI

-- but he knows it is somewhere out there and he keeps his
foot on the gas pedal.

INT. PATROL CAR 44 DAY

The YOUNG PATROLMAN driving on. The OLD PATROLMAN is vaguely scornful of the other man's eagerness.

EXT. HIGHWAY (THROUGH WINDSHIELD) DAY

The pinpoint of the Galaxie in sight like a UFO on a radar scanner - a white dot on the tarmac.

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

Weaving among several regular cars. Then the road is once more clear.

EXT. HIGHWAY (FROM GALAXIE) DAY

The road is a straight line arching between the desert and the cloudless brilliant sky.

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

Reacting to new developments on the road ahead.

KOWALSKI'S POV

More cars coming on, marring the horizon.

CLOSER VIEWPOINT CARS

They are not ordinary cars but patrol cars - three abreast.

FULL SHOT PATROL CARS

They hardly seem to be advancing --

EXT. HIGHWAY (THROUGH WINDSHIELD) DAY

-- rather it is the Galaxie that is making for them.

MOVING SHOT PATROL CARS

Three of them are slewed across the road, blocking it.

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

KOWALSKI looks into the mirror.

INSERT REAR-VIEW MIRROR

His rearguard is free of cars.

FULL SHOT KOWALSKI

Without thinking twice, he once again clutches the steering wheel, plunging it dizzily into second gear. The car shakes from end to end.

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

But it completes another about-face almost on top of the roadblock.

REVERSE SHOT GALAXIE

Once more tearing down the road in the opposite direction, doubling its speed.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI should be happy with his successive successful stunts, but we see concern in his face.

KOWALSKI'S NEW POV

Six cars are now heading towards him in formation, massing themselves into a speeding roadblock.

EXT. CLOSER ON THE CARS DAY

The patrol cars descending furiously.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

But KOWALSKI keeps from panicking. He simply smiles knowingly, as if thinking more clearly than ever.

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

The car is still aimed for the patrol car's formation, seen in BACKGROUND.

EXT. PATROL CARS FORMATION DAY

Progressing menacingly.

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

For a moment it all looks like a demolition derby, a kamikaze demolition derby, KOWALSKI ready to crash into the advancing phalanx.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

But at the last moment KOWALSKI grabs the wheel firmly. Then he is flipping into third gear, now briefly into second, then injecting gas into the engine lightly, now stepping on it heavily.

STUNT SHOT GALAXIE

The car veers right, leaps clear of the road and -- bridging a ditch -- lands in the desert.

STUNT SHOT ALKALI FLAT

As the Galaxie goes plowing through the sand, swerving left and right, almost lurching into a head-on dive, then into a brief spin and righting itself to hit out across teh alkali flat.

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

All the patrol cars have stopped on the road and at its edges.

EXT. CURB DAY

Some of the patrolmen have gotten out, watching how the car gets away --

GROUP SHOT PATROLMEN

-- not without admiration for KOWALSKI's exploit. The YOUNG PATROLMAN is among them.

VIEWPOINT SHOT GALAXIE

Sweeping a path for itself, away and into the open desert.

EXT. DESERT DAY

As the car plunges deep into the Nevada scrubland.

VERY LONG VIEWPOINT SHOT FROM HIGHWAY

The Galaxie is only a puff of smoke in the vast, seemingly boundless waste.

CUT TO:

BLACK AND WHITE SEQUENCE IN FAST MOTION

A Mack Sennett-style car derby, where crazy and wild antique patrol cars are chasing a dashing white Ford Model T. The Funny Chase ends with the White Model T actually flying away over the desert, while the Nevada Keystone Kops are crashing here and there on the road - hitting telephone poles, being hit by speeding vintage trains, even smashing each other.

Finally, a particularly aged patrol car marked with a conspicuous and illiterately drawn number 44, tries to take offer after the airborne White Model T - only to end by falling in a ditch, now an open sewer. In a Merry Finale, two Keystone Kops, -- one old and crotchety, the other young and moronic -- emerge from the wreck soiled and drenched, but still with enough stamina to run after the vanishing Model T and out into the wilderness - brandishing angrily clenched fists at the already gone maverick.

ON SOUND: Silent-comedy music. SUPER SPIC is sometimes bantering on SPEEDED UP TAPE, his commentary an unintelligible strea of accelerated non-sequiturs.

BLACK AND WHITE SEQUENCE ENDS

INT. RADIO STUDIO DAY

ON SOUND: Slapstick music playing over the monitors.

CLOSE UP SUPER SPIC

His very concerned face, with hands on ears, shifting the blue earphones into place, better to pick up the police frequency. Then he takes the earphones off wearily and talks to himself.

SUPER SPIC
(almost sighing)
What is he trying to prove now?

The voice is however not like that of the radio showman but rather an intimate old friend.

ON SOUND: Slapstick music stops.

ENGINEER (OFF)
Ready, Super?

Ready he is not.

SUPER SPIC
Run a tape.

FULL SHOT ENGINEER

He is displeased.

ENGINEER
(sourly)
I already did. Twice.

We see SUPER SPIC in the BACKGROUND, through a glass panel.

SUPER SPIC
Then --
(imitating Bogart's voice)
Play it again, Sham!

ENGINEER
But, Super...

SUPER SPIC turns around abruptly.

SUPER SPIC
Oh, come on, man -- are you blind
or sump'n? Can't you see I'm
thinking?

The ENGINEER is speechless.

CLOSE UP SUPER SPIC

His sad, bespectacled face, worrying. The CAMERA HOLDS on
him.

EXT. DESERT DAY

High noon in a Nevada desert. The Galaxie is rolling along
in the middle of nowhere, leaving a thick cloud of dust
behind it. When the dust settles, the car's deep tracks are
clearly imprinted on the sand.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI is trying to figure a way out, futilely scanning the
desert.

SUCCESSIVE VIEWPOINTS

1 - The unreachable horizon ahead.

2 - A vast expanse of sand to the right.

3 - A greater sandy vastness to the left.

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

The CAMERA STAYS PUT as the car drives away, sinking into the desert.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI is looking at the ground immediately ahead of the car.

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

Intrigued.

EXT. GROUND (THROUGH WINDSHIELD) DAY

There are car tracks clearly visible across the car's path.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI slows down to stick his head out and look back.

KOWALSKI'S POV (MOVING SHOT)

The tracks left by the Galaxie are exactly the same as those he is now slowly crossing.

FULL SHOT KOWALSKI

He is so appalled by his discover that he stops the car, turning off the engine in dismay.

HIGH ANGLE SHOT (FROM CRANE) GALAXIE

The halted car plus the completed criss-cross pattern. The sands spread way on all sides.

ON SOUND: Silence

The CAMERA CLIMBS DOWN towards the car to a FULL SHOT of the car's front - dusty, the falling on it flatly, making heat waves rise from the hood.

Then --

VOICE (OFF)
Kowalski...

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

Startled by this voice in the desert, then trying to find who is calling him.

VOICE (OFF) (CONT'D)
Kowalski, can you hear me?

KOWALSKI recognizes now the disembodied voice. It is SUPER SPIC over the radio.

KOWALSKI
(smiling)
I'll be damned...

SUPER SPIC (V.O.)
Do you hear me, Kowalski?

INSERT CAR RADIO

SUPER SPIC'S tone is low, intimate, the bantering and clowning left behind.

SUPER SPIC (OVER RADIO) (CONT'D)
I know you can hear, Kowalski. I'm
sure you hear me now, this very
minute.

TWO SHOT KOWALSKI AND RADIO

He is listening attentively to this friend in need.

SUPER SPIC (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Now listen very carefully. You are
somewhere in the desert and the
whole mobile force of the Nevada
State Highway Patrol is after
you...

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

The car is totally isolated, the voice of the DJ coming out of the blue.

SUPER SPIC (V.O.)
Unidentified person or persons (if
you see what I mean) have seen you
going deep into the desert. Some
people imagine you'll try to get to
California - through Death Valley!
(MORE)

SUPER SPIC (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Others bet you'll die in the
desert. These Few are just too
happy to see you vanish for good
out there. My guess is you're
somewhere near Frenchman Flat...

CUT TO:

INT. RADIO STUDIO DAY

SUPER SPIC is speaking very carefully. We see his table cluttered with telegrams and letters.

SUPER SPIC
If I'm right, I want to tell you
the Heat is on and eagerly waiting
for you to come up for air and then
grab you. But also there are many
people -- my tape-deck is just as
loaded with telegrams as my head is
jammed with phone calls -- many
many more who wish you well in your
getaway, wherever that may lead to
...

In the BACKGROUND, on the other side of the glass panel, the ENGINEER and an unknown man with an authoritarian air are listening to the speech with the gravest concern.

SUPER SPIC (CONT'D)
... To these people - all of them -
you are like - a - totem...

CUT TO:

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI not very happy with the prospect.

SUPER SPIC (V.O.)
... I know, I know! I can ever see
your face right now. I know it's
not very amusing to be taken for an
idol. Specially for you, who could
have so little intention of being
turned into a statue, standing
still forever...

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY, RECEPTION HALL, CORRIDORS RADIO STATION DAY

As SUPER SPIC speaks over loudspeakers, we see the doorman, the receptionist, the elevator boy - even the most hardened cynics in the Station - being moved by this speech.

SUPER SPIC (V.O.)

... All the same, many people - and I number myself among them - want you, need you... Remember what King Solomon said -- how he preferred a live dog to a dead lion? Imagine then what the Old Man of the Desert would of though of a real live lion!

INT. STUDIO DAY

SUPER SPIC is himself moved by his own words. In the BACKGROUND we see the other people gathered in the control room.

SUPER SPIC

I guess you know all about the desert - all that crap - though it's not really crap at all. I mean how it gets up to over 130 degrees at noon and then drops well below freezing at night...

INSERT -- SLIDES AND PHOTOS

Still photographs of the desert are seen as if screened by a slide-projector.

- 1 - View of Death Valley
- 2 - Approaches to the desert.
- 3 - Sand dunes
- 4 - The Amargosa range in the background and a cow's skull in the foreground.
- 5 - A blasted acacia in the arid plain beneath the blue mountains.
- 6 - Creosote bush, greasewood and saguaro.
- 7 - Sands riddled by the desert wind like sastrugi.

SUPER SPIC (V.O.) (CONT'D)

... Everybody knows about the desert, so I guess you're there just because you have no other choice. As I see it, the only thing for you to do now is to try and get out of that hell before it's too late. Get out of the desert no matter what you might face here in this jungle...

EXT. DESERT DAY

The last STILL VIEW of the desert becomes a LIVE VIEW and the CAMERA FLIES OVER the sands for a few seconds. We see nothing but sand until IT COMES OVER to the car. KOWALSKI is quietly smoking.

SUPER SPIC (V.O.)

--- I wish I could help you now but I can't. I don't think anybody can -- except perhaps this crazy lucky streak of yours... Now you're gonna need some more luck. All of it perhaps and badly! -- because -- Kowalski baby -- the desert is like a maze. The maze to end all mazes! You can beat the police, I kid you not, as Captain Queeg would say. You can beat the road. You can even beat the clock. But you can't beat the desert, for out there, there's no time left. All is space down there... Even time has been turned into space. You can't ever get to the end of it because space is infinite -- and the desert is all space! I should know about that. I know it, Kowalski, because space is the blindman's time-sense. You ain't gonna beat the desert, K. You can't. Nobody can. You just cannot --

KOWALSKI angrily switches the radio off.

CUT TO:

INT. RADIO STUDIO DAY

Miles away, cooped up among sheets of glass, blind SUPER SPIC news immediately what KOWALSKI has done.

SUPER SPIC
(shouting)
Wait! ...

CUT TO:

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI
Go to hell!

He is igniting the engine, starting up the car, shooting off straight ahead -- as in a fit of paranoia.

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

Keeping his eyes on an imaginary road, his hands firmly gripping the wheel, KOWALSKI drivers on for a long stretch,

DRIVER'S VIEWPOINT

The desert reduced to a very clear simple straight line.

VERY HIGH ANGLE HELICOPTER SHOT

The CAMERA FLIES UP to look down on the car. IT CLIMBS HIGHER AND HIGHER and finally we can see below - the Galaxie going around in circles, in wide almost perfect circles. Just like a crazy, forlorn merry-go-round in the wilderness.

CUT TO:

INT. RADIO STUDIO DAY

Angry executive are berating SUPER SPIC, surrounding him, shouting at him with silent words. We cannot hear them - not only because we see the scene through glass panes, but also because tapes are blasting out acid-rock music over the monitors.

CLOSE UP SUPER SPIC

-- who has a vacant, gone air about him, both hands on his blue earphones, his mind somewhere else.

CUT TO:

INT. GALAXIE DAY

The sun bursts from the windshield and the hood, while the whiteness out there is getting to be so unbearable that KOWALSKI has to fumble in the glove compartment for a pair of sunglasses. He puts them on. (He seems to be having hallucinations the moment he wears the sunglasses. But it is only his eidetic memory reliving many bygone - and interchangeable - experiences. His mind is in a maze of recollections.)

CHAIN OF VERY SLOW MOVING SHOTS.

- 1 - The desert DISSOLVES TO a beach under a fience sun.
- 2 - A frozen tideline, like the icy banks of a Northern bay in mid-winter.
- 3 - Shifting snow-fields.
- 4 - the tundra is now covered with sastrugi -- wave-like seams on the surface of hard snow caused by polar winds.
- 5 - A snow-covered bridge spanning a mist-filled gully and over a stream running frozen between giant trees of ice and iceberg-like cliffs on the other bank.

DISSOLVE TO:

SPECIAL EFFECT SHOT

A phantasmagoria in the purest white, alomost surgically sterile in its whiteness.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE WINTER/DAY

The very real snowy countryside and Lake Tahoe in mid-winter.

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

He is wearing snow-goggles instead of sunglasses. He takes them off and the impossible glare forces him to close his eyes.

INT. DREAM-CAR (WINTER LANDSCAPE THROUGH WINDOWS) DAY

KOWALSKI is dressed in heavy winter sportsclothes, his hair tussled and speckled with snowflakes, as if he has just gotten in the car. When he opens his eyes, it is to look at a girl snuggled in a white fur coat beside him. She is naked, rose-pink on white.

The winter sun coming through the windshield makes her body glow unreally. She sleeps peacefully, her raven hair spread across the fur. KOWALSKI looks at her lovingly for a moment, then turns to find and light a cigarette. As the match is struck, the girl opens her eyes. Dark, passionate eyes. She smiles at KOWALSKI, very tenderly. When she speaks, her soft voice comes from the innermost depths of the memory, floatingly, all edges smoothed by the cosmic lapse of time. We recognize her as the girl in KOWALSKI's reverie in the Denver service station. She is VERA.

VERA

(tenderly)

Hello out there! I didn't hear you come back.

Her voice comes from a vastness of dream-years and somehow we have an inkling of her being dead.

KOWALSKI

Vera?

We do not know if he is trying to be sure of her identity or merely saying her name out loud.

VERA

Yes?

She is most reassuring, in every way. She is bodily very real too. Tiny, with small breasts, her only blemish being a ceratin physical hardness in an otherwise girlish figure.

All this gives her the appearance of a beautiful hermaphrodite. But there is nothing androgynous in her character. On first seeing her one could only say she is strikingly feminine.

VERA (CONT'D)

Yes?

He is silent, struggling with the words - or perhaps with this recollection. VERA looks into his eyes.

VERA (CONT'D)

I'm still here.

But he is still fighting. Finally --

KOWALSKI

It's funny...

He does not say any more.

VERA

What is?

KOWALSKI

Well - I was just thinking... It's
a funny name. I mean, your name.
I thought it was a Russian name--

VERA

(correcting him)

Italian.

KOWALSKI

-- so I guessed you must be Jewish.
(acknowledging her
correction)

Yes, I know it's Italian. Now I
know. You told me it means truth.

VERA

True. Latin for real. I looked it
up in the dictionary.

KOWALSKI

Yes, I know now, but then I thought
you were Jewish.

VERA

(a hint of an old
grievance?)

You assumed many things about me.

They are both suddenly silent. There is an undercurrent of
tension in their words. She is the first to speak again.

VERA (CONT'D)

(almost challengingly)

What if I were?

KOWALSKI

Were what?

VOICE

Jewish.

KOWALSKI

I've nothing against Jewish people.
In fact, many of my closest
relatives were Jews - once.

TWO SHOT KOWALSKI AND VERA

He smiles jokingly. But she is serious. With a conciliatory
gesture he hands her the cigarette.

CLOSE UP VERA

We identify the cigarette as a joint. She takes it and inhales deeply, twice. Then she passes the stick back to him. The CAMERA PANS OVER with her gesture - and when she puts out her hand we are suddenly in yet another place, another time.

INT. CAR NEAR BEACH LATE SUMMER/DAY

The car must be parked at the edge of a cliff, for through the windows we see below a lonely beach and the sea. KOWALSKI is wearing a dark blue shirt and Calobar sunglasses. His hair is much shorter and he looks every inch the police officer off duty. Now he shakes his head and we see he is not too happy about being offered a reefer by VERA. She is as beautiful as ever, dressed in hip clothes. She keeps the cigarette for herself with a greedy grimace. She goes on smoking avidly, intent on getting stoned. He looks vexed.

KOWALSKI

Why did you have to say that?

She is not terribly concerned.

VERA

Like what?

KOWALSKI

That silly remark about once a policeman...

VERA

It's not silly. Trite but true.

KOWALSKI

(upset)

It is not.

VERA

Yes it is.

KOWALSKI

Prove it.

TWO SHOT VERA AND KOWALSKI

She is about to answer but stops to stare at him.

VERA

See what I mean? That's a policeman's reaction.

(MORE)

VERA (CONT'D)

Assuming things, reading hidden meanings into everything, always ready for the booby trap.

(pause)

There's no catch in this!

(she means the cigarette)

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

He tried to control himself but he cannot. He turns to her furiously. But she has moved closer to the door, creating a noticeable gap of indifference between them. Besides, she is utterly unreachable now because through the car windows we see a different landscape altogether.

INT. CAR AT LAKE TAHOE AUTUMN / DAY

They are not in fact on a cliff any more but somewhere in the country in mid-fall. VERA and KOWALSKI are dressed accordingly. They are not fighting any more. But he is somewhat upright.

KOWALSKI

What d'you mean, assuming things and reading hidden meanings?

VERA

(in a milder tone)

Well - to begin with -

(she smiles

ingratiatingly)

You thought - when we first met you assumed I was a man in drag!

TWO SHOT KOWALSKI AND VERA

KOWALSKI smiles.

KOWALSKI

Yes I did. I admit it.

VERA

Very funny!

He laughs.

KOWALSKI

But it sure wasn't funny then.

VERA

Not to you. I couldn't care less.

KOWALSKI
I was blind with fury though.

VERA
Blind, period.
(pause)
How could you possibly have taken
me for a man? You don't have to
answer that! Not if you can recall
those -- those -- plastic Mae Wests
you were after at the time!

She is laughing now.

KOWALSKI
Be fair, Vera. You must remember
that in those days you yourself
were going around with a pretty
bunch of gay looking people and
wearing very weird clothes --

CLOSE UP VERA

Mockingly indignant.

VERA
Oh, my God! Gay people, weird
clothes! How square can you get.

She looks at him pointedly to catch his reaction.

FULL SHOT KOWALSKI

-- who jumps as if hit by the word - and we see we are back
in --

INT. CAR ON CLIFF EARLY SPRING / DAY

The environment is almost the same as in the scene before
last. But they are wearing different clothes to indicate
another occasion. Through the window we can see the beach,
equally deserted. VERA speaks as if continuing the argument
about the marihuana cigarette. But she is apologetic now.

VERA
But we've joked about your being
square many times before!

KOWALSKI is grievously hurt.

KOWALSKI
Do you have any idea of what I'd
get if they ever catch me? Do you?

VERA

Probably two years, maybe three.
But I'll be in a tighter spot.
Don't forget I've been busted
before. That plus the premises
being owned by me.

She makes a gesture -- by 'premises' she means the car.

KOWALSKI

What I mean - and get this through
your sleek little skull - what I
mean is that I will get
dishonourable discharge!

VOICE

(piqued)

Right, if you go on being so sneaky
about it.

(a throwaway thing)

Do it in the open! Defy them once
for all -- and fuck the fuzz!

KOWALSKI

(really insulted)

I am the fuzz!

VERA giggles, then falls silent. Next she is laughing again.
Though when she speaks she does not oke.

VERA

Wouldn't it be funny after all if
you did have to arrest me? Me
trying to turn you on -- and you
turning me in!

But she is so incensed she is not looking at him any more.
KOWALSKI senses the futility of their argument.

KOWALSKI

(conciliatory)

Vera, we're not at war with one
another.

CLOSE UP VERA

Her profile neatly cut out against the seascape background.

KOWALSKI (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(gently)

I'm friend, not foe.

She turns quickly to him --

INT. CAR ON THE BEACH LATE AUTUMN / DAY

The car is further down the beach now. KOWALSKI is wearing bathing trunks. For the first time we notice he has a tremendous scar that spans his powerful chest.

VERA is wearing a bikini, still sitting next to KOWALSKI. She is seized by a sudden tenderness, then by passion. She kisses him, caresses his face, his arm, his chest. She runs a finger over his ugly scar. He does not like her touching his scar, as if it were still a painful wound.

VERA

I love this.

She kisses his scar. He jerks himself free.

VERA (CONT'D)

You hate it but I love it.

KOWALSKI

I don't hate it. If I were going to hate it I'd end by hating myself. I have scars in many other places.

VOICE

I love 'em. I mean, I love your body. But I also love this beautiful scar. I love your scars, all of them - but specially this one.

(she runs her fingers over it)

Though you hate it.

KOWALSKI

I don't hate it.

VERA

I know you do too hate it. But I love it.

We sense there is more - and less - in what VERA says than a simple declaration of love for his scar.

KOWALSKI

I don't hate it!

(pause)

I just hate what it means.

VERA

What does it mean?

He answers her very slowly.

KOWALSKI
You know what it means.

VERA
No, I don't know.

KOWALSKI
But I told you about it.

VOICE
Tell me more.

KOWALSKI
You know all there's to know.

VERA
Then tell me again.

KOWALSKI
I don't want to.

VERA
Please!

KOWALSKI
I don't want to talk about it.

VERA
It'll do you good.

KOWALSKI
No, it won't do any good at all.

VERA
Only if you make war on war will
you overcome it. Tell me all about
war, about your war.

KOWALSKI
(final)
NO!

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

He turns his distraught face away from VERA and looks out the window. He cannot see a soul anywhere on the beach. After a while he looks back at VERA.

KOWALSKI's POV

But she is not there any more.

INT. CAR ON THE BEACH WINTER / DAY

It is very early in the morning. The car is parked on the sand, wrapped in mist and sea-dew. The beach is utterly deserted. KOWALSKI looks around the car for VERA. Then he looks out and sees her.

VIEWPOINT VERA IN THE SEA

She is surfing on the rough winter tide.

FULL SHOT KOWALSKI

-- who looks as if he has just woken up from a nightmare. He honks his horn when VERA comes surfing closer to him.

FULL SHOT VERA

Who waves her hand at him - only to lose her balance and be thrown off the board.

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

Very much concerned about VERA being wiped out.

EXT. SHORELINE WINTER / DAY

But she is surfacing now and swimming towards the beach, towing her surfing-board along. Now she is wearing a brightly-coloured wet suit. She leaves the board on the dry sand and comes over to KOWALSKI. The CAMERA FOLLOWS her.

KOWALSKI

You okay?

VERA

Yes. All in one piece - but wet.

(tenderly)

What about you, baby? You chest any better.

KOWALSKI

Now, yes, but I was worried about you. Aren't you feeling cold?

VOICE

I should be freezing but I feel on top of the morning!

KOWALSKI

You're crazy - surfing this time of the year!

VERA

It's all your fault. You shouldn't have taught me how in the first place. It's alright with you if I go out again now and try to ride a twelve-footer?

KOWALSKI

You're nuts!

VERA

So are you. That's why I love you so. To prove it I'll ride a swell in your honour - perhaps I'll even catch a tsunami!

KOWALSKI

You'll catch pneumonia. Go on! Go back and drown yourself!

VERA

(kissing him)

Sayonara!

(then turning her face)

Remember me.

KOWALSKI turns in his seat and grimaces with pain in the chest. He wraps himself in his robe and watches VERA walking towards the sea in the BACKGROUND. As she enters the water, the sun starts to come through the morning mist and hits the car with a sudden bright light. Reflections on the windshield make us lose sight of VERA.

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

Trying to locate VERA though the exploding sunbeams. Then he turns round in a 90-degree turn, amid blinding flashes of memory and the present light reflections. The CAMERA PULLS BACK and we see KOWALSKI driving a jeep across the beach under heavy artillery fire.

ON SOUND: bomb explosives, whistling projectiles, etc.

KOWALSKI is dressed like a soldier, steel helmet and all. He is speaking over a walkie-talkie that he holds awkwardly in one hand, with the other hand still driving the jeep across the beach. Physically it is the same beach where VERA was surfing. But now there are bodies strewn everywhere - Soldiers wounded and dying, firing in relays, running or crawling forward. Bomb craters pock the sands.

FULL MOVING SHOT JEEP

It has three stars painted on the side. KOWALSKI swerves left and then right then left again, dodging exploding mines and enemy fire while trying not to fall into any crater. On the passenger seat we can see a wounded officer.

CLOSE ON THE JEEP MOVING SHOT

We distinguish three tiny stars on the wounded officer's helmet.

EXT. FIRST AID OUTPOST DAY

As the jeep arrives and medics rush over to take care of the wounded general. Before being hauled down to the beach, the general regains consciousness. He shouts orders to KOWALSKI. KOWALSKI speaks to him but the din of the fighting gives us no chance to hear.

EXT. HELL BEACH DAY

FULL SHOT THE JEEP

As it is hit with a direct impact through the windshield. KOWALSKI has been wounded. He loses his helmet. Slowly, very slowly, he lets go of the smashed steering-wheel. The jeep is caroming wildly up the beach as it is struck by more fire and finally obliterated by the blazing sun.

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

On his face all the horrors of war - though as the CAMERA PULLS BACK we see he is thousands of miles and thousands of days away from the Korean beach-head. He is in his Galaxie, running wild in an American desert. But presently --

ON SOUND: a loud bang somewhere outside.

EXT. GALAXIE NEVADA DESERT / DAY

The Galaxie caught in a flurry of dust and sunshine, slowing down, one of its tyres dragging flat on the sand.

INSERT RUNNING TYRE

The car has just had a blow-out.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

At the noise of the burst tyre, KOWALSKI wakes up to the reality of the desert and the wild car.

He brings the latter under control and finally stops it, turning off the engine before trying to find out what has happened.

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

He pokes his head out and there it is --

KOWALSKI'S POV

-- the left front tyre all flattened out.

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

He damns his luck with hissing rage and strikes the steering-wheel with his fist. He hunts for more pills. The envelope is empty. So, to calm himself he lights a cigarette - his last. He crushes the wrapping and throws it away. He smokes avidly, inhaling deeply. His chest still hurts.

CUT TO:

INSERT TV IMAGE

An old photograph of KOWALSKI (BLACK AND WHITE) TV cut to: Outside Argo's Car-Delivery Agency. (COLOUR)

TV COMMENTATOR (V.O.)
-- the car-delivery agency for
which the celebrated tearaway
Kowalski is working as delivery
driver... Let's hear what our own
Emerson Waldo has in store for
us...

TV CUT TO:

INT. GARAGE

We see BLACKIE and another man being interviewed by a TV journalist.

INTERVIEWER
(to TV Camera)
Here we are at point zero! At
Argo's Car-Delivery, where
Kowalski's great exploit really
began!
(MORE)

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)

To be questioned by West TV-News
we've respectfully summoned Mister
Holly Mekas, owner of the agency
and its attendant, Blackie MacKees.

(to BLACKIE)

Blackie, you who knows him best,
what's you opinion of this man
Kawalski?

BLACKIE

(reluctantly)

A -- great driver.

INTERVIEWER

(cutely)

Well, I guess we all know that by
now. Especially the highway
patrols of three states!

BLACKIE

(curtly)

He's a good man too!

OWNER

(almost to himself)

You can say that again!

INTERVIEWER

(to Owner)

Has this ever happened to you
before, Mr. Mekas?

OWNER

(angry)

Never! We always deliver our cars
on time! That's the policy of the
house - and we've been in business
for a long long time. It's very
unfortunate that - this - this
maverick has let us down so bad --

BLACKIE

(interrupting him)

But this car's only due Monday, Mr.
Mekas. So, he's still ontine.

OWNER

Yeah?

BLACKIE

Yeah! And it's not a Maverick he's
taken but a Galaxie!

An argument follows between BLACKIE and OWNER but we are not able to witness it because the TV Iimage is cut to:

TV Still Photos of SUPER SPIC (COLOUR)

Then our CAMERA PULLS BACK and we see TV monitors and cameras and TV people crowding the RADIO STUDIO, where they are about to interview SUPER SPIC.

ON SOUND: SUPER SPIC. Latin-rock theme over monitors.

The INTERVIEWER gets his cue. SUPER SPIC is ready to act as a DJ during a mock-record session.

TV COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

Super Spic needs no introduction as our number one DJ but he's certainly on his way to becoing a national celebrity in his own right as the invisible guide of--

CLOSE UP SUPER SPIC

He visibly hates what the COMMENTATOR is saying.

SUPER SPIC
(to himself)
Yeah - the blind leading the blind!

ON SOUND: Acid-rock music.

CUT TO:

INT. GALAXIE NEVADA DESERT / DAY

Music is coming over the Galaxie's radio and for the very first time the driver's seat is empty. The car is still stuck in the desert but KOWALSKI is not in it. Its doors are open.

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI is finishing changing the tyres. Then he gathers up crow-bars, wrenches and the jack. Lifting the burst tyre, he is ready to put everything back into the open trunk. Suddenly he becomes paralyzed.

ON SOUND: a familiar rattling noise.

NEW ANGLE FAVOURING KOWALSKI

On the way to the boot, almost in front of his face, ready to strike is a big vicious-looking rattle-snake. Easily, ever so slowly, as if hardly moving at all, KOWALSKI leaves the tools one by one on the ground, as if they were about to explode. Then, still crouching, he begins to back up towards the car. The CAMERA FOLLOWS him as he gets in the car, takes a revolver from the glove compartment and gets out again, carefully...

REVERSE SHOT FROM CAR DOOR

But the snake is no longer visible.

EXT. BACK OF GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI looks cautiously for the snake around the car, his gun cocked, eyes everywhere, when --

VOICE (OFF)
Don't shoot, stranger!

KOWALSKI turns around, utterly surprised, to face --

KOWALSKI's POV

-- a living anachronism. A amall and extremely old man, very much the stranded prospector, battered slouch hat and all. He wears a tufty beard and is virtually caked with dirt and sand. But more extraordinary than his looks are his appurtenances. In his left hand he carries a big wicker basket. In his right hand he has a long forked stick with a thick string attached to its handle which runs up to be tied in a loop connecting both ends like a bow.

TWO SHOT KOWALSKI AND INTRUDER

All rotten teeth and much chewed quid, the old man smiles at KOWALSKI, knowingly.

HOBO PROSPECTOR
Don't have to do no shootin', son.
I'll take care of them vermin.
(exhibiting the snake)
Here h'it is, son. 'Live 'n'
kickin'!

Deftly he opens the basket, lets the loop loose and before the snake has time to bite or even turn around, he thrusts it into the basket, banging the lid shut quickly. He then lifts the basket and speaks to it.

HOBO PROSPECTOR (CONT'D)

There y'are, vermin!
(to Kowalski)
Mighty dangerous vermin, son. But
not to h'its present company!

He pats the basket confidently, almost cheerfully. KOWALSKI comes into SHOT, carefully, still apprehensive of the old man and his catch.

KOWALSKI

What d'you have in there?

HOBO PROSPECTOR

(cheerful)

More fellow-vermin.

KOWALSKI

Snakes?

HOBO PROSPECTOR

(as if speaking of a
treasure)

Yep. Rattlers, copperheads and two
precious corals.

(suddenly sad)

But not even one sidewinder. Cuss
them!

KOWALSKI

What d'you do with those snakes?

HOBO PROSPECTOR

Why, trade 'em!

(counting with his
fingers)

Trade em fur coffee, sugar, salt,
tobacco, flour and beans. Them
vermin are the fat of the desert!

KOWALSKI

(probingly)

You living here?

But before the old man has time to answer, from the car --

SUPER SPIC (V.O.)

Attention, Kowalski! I've got an
important message for you,
Kowalski!

INT/EXT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI is already in the car, anxiously listening.

SUPER SPIC (V.O.)
Kowalski, are you listening?

KOWALSKI nods, in FOREGROUND, in CLOSE UP. In the BACKGROUND the old man looks at him bewildered.

SUPER SPIC (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Now listen to me, Kowalski.
Copters from the Highway Patrol are
combining the Nevada Desert --

KOWALSKI leaps out of the car to scan the sky.

VIEWPOINT DESERT SKY

Not a thing anywhere. Not even birds.

SUPER SPIC (V.O.) (CONT'D)
-- hunting for you. Listen
carefully. Believe it or not,
they're trying to help you.
They're out to get you alright, but
they're also out to help you. Can
you believe it? But they really
are. Remember I told you about
lucky streaks and dim chances?
Well, this is your only chance,
your last --

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI switches off the radio, without even bothering to get back into the car. He turns anxiously to stare at the sky. The old man moves from the BACKGROUND to stand next to him. But he is not concerned with the sky at all.

TWO SHOT KOWALSKI AND HOBO PROSPECTOR

After a moment --

HOBO PROSPECTOR
I cain't say I don't.

KOWALSKI is still looking at the sky and he does not even bother to turn around.

KOWALSKI
You can't say you don't what?

HOBO PROSPECTOR
Live in this here desert.

KOWALSKI does pay attention ot him now.

KOWALSKI
You mean you live here?

HOBO PROSPECTOR
Yep.

KOWALSKI
Then you know how I can get outa
here!

HOBO PROSPECTOR
I reckon I do.

KOWALSKI
And you're gonna help me to get
out!

HOBO PROSPECTOR
Well that depends--

KOWALSKI grabs him by his dirty cowhide vest.

KOWALSKI
Depends on what?

The old man looks at KOWALSKI's hand significantly. KOWALSKI lets go of him. The old man dusts himself off.

KOWALSKI (CONT'D)
Depends on what, I'm asking you!

HOBO PROSPECTOR
(calmly)
I heard ya, son. Depends on y'r a-
helpin' me fust.

KOWALSKI
To do what?

HOBO PROSPECTOR
(bargaining)
Help me to git masself where I wuz
fermurly headed fur.

KOWALSKI
Where's that exactly?

HOBO PROSPECTOR

Well, son when I fust heard 'bout
ya I wuz headed fur mah
destination. But jest after taht I
heard a might loud bang and jest
then I saw y'r car. Thet's how--

The old man stops himself short to look at the sky.

HOBO PROSPECTOR (CONT'D)

Seems to me as if them is a-comin'
now, son.

KOWALSKI looks at the sky. There is not even a cloud now.

KOWALSKI

Can't see a damn thing!

The old man chuckles with a gargling sound.

HOBO PROSPECTOR

I bet ya caint see mah truck
neither and that's just over there.

He spits tobacco juice to point the exact location where his truck is supposed to be clearly seen

VIEWPOINT THE EMPTIEST DESERT

TWO SHOT KOWALSKI AND HOBO PROSPECTOR

KOWALSKI has no time to lose.

KOWALSKI

Come on, get in the car!

But the old man is in no hurry to do so.

HOBO PROSPECTOR

Jest to do what, son?

KOWALSKI is already starting the car, racing-driver style.
The old man does not even seem ready to move.

KOWALSKI

To get the hell outa here!

HOBO PROSPECTOR

(overlapping)

That's no way to get to hell...

KOWALSKI

(cutting in)

Isn't it?

HOBO PROSPECTOR
(overlapping)
If I may say so, son.

KOWALSKI
How'd you make it then?

Taking what seems to KOWALSKI a hell of a lot of time to answer -

HOBO PROSPECTOR
Well, son, to mah knowledge the best way to git-a-way is to stay rooted to the spot.

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

Utterly dumbfounded.

EXT. HELICOPTER DAY

Making a thorough survey of the desert.

INT. HELICOPTER DAY

Once in a while the pilot speaks over the radio. But the co-pilot is glued to his binoculars. Down below, the desert makes a blinding backdrop. The co-pilot takes the binoculars away from his face for a moment - we recognize him as non other than the YOUNG PATROLMAN. Both he and the pilot seem discouraged.

LONG MOVING SHOT HELICOPTER

The CAMERA FLIES OVER some greenish-brown patches. Greasewood, creosote bush, some Monument cactus. Then more sand. Now a concentrated patch of thorn-bushes. Sands. More sands. The more bushes, clustered in a peculiar looking patch.

EXT. HELICOPTER (LOW ANGLE SHOT) DAY

Veering away.

NEW ANGLE PATCH

Under the odd-looking patch of thorn-bushes - the Galaxie, conveniently camouflaged.

CLOSER ON THE GALAXIE

All kinds of shrubs and tufts of grass have been tied to the car very carefully and with much expertise. Here and there the camouflage has been completed with heads of sands and loose rocks.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI scrutinizing the old man's face as the latter peeps through the hanging foliage.

KOWALSKI
(whispering)
Gone?

HOBO PROSPECTOR
Not yet.

KOWALSKI
Can you see it?

HOBO PROSPECTOR
Nope. But I kin hear h'it. Sounds like h'it's a-headin' North.

INT. HELICOPTER DAY

The pilot about to make off, when YOUNG PATROLMAN urgently points at something down below.

VIEWPOINT MOVING SHOT

A darker patch of sand.

CLOSER VIEWPOINT HOVERING SHOT

It is a very strange-looking vehicle.

INT. HELICOPTER DAY

YOUNG PATROLMAN cannot make head nor tail of it.

YOUNG PATROLMAN
(mock-disbelief)
A -- truck?

PILOT
Yeah, a derelict. It's probably been there since the Depression.

The pilot and YOUNG PATROLMAN laughs it off.

EXT. HELICOPTER (LOW ANGLE SHOT) DAY

Swishing up and away.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI is still relying on the old man. The HOBO PROSPECTOR stops listening. Behind them, we can see the snake basket safely placed on the back seat.

HOBO PROSPECTOR
So yer name is Cow-alski?

KOWALSKI
Kowalski.

HOBO PROSPECTOR
Mine is Scott. Death Valley Scotty
to my friends. Ye've probably
heard 'about me.

KOWALSKI cannot resist mimicking the old man.

KOWALSKI
Cain't say Ah never have.

He smiles and outstretches his arm, hand open. The HOBO PROSPECTOR rubs a dirty hand against his dusty vest before shaking KOWALSKI's hand.

KOWALSKI (CONT'D)
Pleased to meet you.

HOBO PROSPECTOR
Pleasure's mine son.

KOWALSKI
Where to now, Paw?

HOBO PROSPECTOR
Straight ahead.
(he points at the horizon)
Easy, very easy, son.

He sticks his mummified head carefully out of the window, looking intently at the sky.

EXT. GALAXIE (HIGH ANGLE SHOT) DAY

The camouflaged car rolls over the waves of sand like a dirty-green floating island.

CUT TO:

INSERT SHOT TV MONITOR

An identification form is coming over closed circuit TV, for the use of the police force. We recognize a double photograph of KOWALSKI (front and profile) pasted on it. The photos are seen in CLOSE UP: The text of the dossier is magnified until it is readable, the information being considerably shortened by customary abbreviation.

ON SOUND: First the humming and clicking of the set, then an anonymous, monotonous voice recites the data aloud.

READER (V.O.)
Name: Kowalski. Christian name:
Krzysztof...

ON THE SET. QUICK BIG CLOSE UP of the name KRZYSZTOF.

READER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
... Kilo, Romeo, Zulu, Yankee,
Sierra, Zulu, Tango, Oscar,
Foxtrot. Details: Age, 39. Sex,
Male. Race, Caucasian. Height,
six foot two. Weight, 195 pounds.
Hair, blond. Colour of eyes, Blue.
Complexion, fair. Distinguishing
marks: large scar across chest,
minor scars disseminated on head,
arms and legs. Life History:
Born, San Francisco. Date, July
19, 1930. Polish parents, both
deceased. No next of kin. No
formal education. Professional
motor-cyclist, 1947-48. Enlisted
in US Army 1949. Service on Korean
War. Wounded on P'oHang Beach-
head. Medal of Honour for Bravery
in Battle, 1950. Honourable
discharge, 1953. Racing driver.
Seriously injured in Daytona NASCAR
1955. Entered San Francisco Police
Force 1956. Twice promoted.
Detective first class 1958.
Dishonourable discharge.
(MORE)

READER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
(Classified documents available to authorized personnel only)

Demolition derby driver and Auto-clown, 1964-65. Driving license suspended 1965-67 previous failure to submit to alcohol-level test. Minor jobs. Other driving jobs from 1968 to date. Additional data: None...

INT. GALAXIE DAY

The car slowly moving through the naked desert. KOWALSKI keeps driving doggedly, the old man is busily scrutinizing the receding horizon. The he listens attentively and abruptly shouts--

HOBO PROSPECTOR
Over there!

-- urging KOWALSKI to follow his command. Though he obeys it is obvious that KOWALSKI cannot see anything.

KOWALSKI'S POV

The desert stretches away from him for miles around.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI turns to look at the old man, who is concerned only with the invisible road that he is somehow able to see.

ON SOUND: above the purring of the engine and the crunch of the tyres rolling over the sand, we can hear faint shouting and distant wailing noises.

KOWALSKI begins to hear them, then secretly dismisses them as probably another delusion. But the old man is faintly smiling, like the ancient mariner about to sight land.

ON SOUND: The shouts become nearer and we can clearly identify them as gospel singing.

But still we see nothing.

HOBO PROSPECTOR
There they are!

KOWALSKI cannot see a thing either.

KOWALSKI
Where?

HOBO PROSPECTOR
Right over there. Cain't ya see
them?

KOWALSKI
No. Who are they?

HOBO PROSPECTOR
You'll soon see fur yurself, son.

LONG MOVING SHOT HORIZON

Suddenly, surging across the desert as if out of nowhere, we see cars, trucks, a trailer, a caravan of several moving vans.

TWO SHOT KOWALSKI AND HOBO PROSPECTOR

Respectively, coolly intrigued and elated.

FULL MOVING SHOT SITE

We see people - men, women and children - shouting and singing. It is a revival meeting.

FULL SHOT MOVING VAN

On its side is painted in big block letters - J. HOVAH Revivals.

CLOSE SHOT THE VAN'S LETTERING

There is something wrong with the last word. Then we realize that it originals said Removals. But over the letters 'MOV' somebody has superimposed a makeshift sign reading 'VIV'.

EXT. REVIVAL MEETING DAY

People are singing and shouting "Hallelujah!" around an open truck.

FULL SHOT OPEN TRUCK

There is an organ-with-drum-and-guitar combo perched on it.

ON SOUND: The gathering is heard shouting "The Lord be praised!", "Oh, Sweet Jesus!" OFF.

FULL SHOT LEADER

Heading the combo and leading the shouting is a very tall cadaverous man in black.

He is wearing a long black coat, black preacher's hat and has a black bible in his hands. He is J. HOVAH.

CLOSE UP HOVAH

He swings and twists as he intones in a rasping baritone voice --

J. HOVAH
Jesus, sweet Jesus! Oh, my Lord!
Jesus, oh Jesus!

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI is really amused.

KOWALSKI
A revival meeting!

HOBO PROSPECTOR
Stop here, son.

But KOWALSKI keeps on driving.

HOBO PROSPECTOR (CONT'D)
(concerned)
Stop!

KOWALSKI
What is it?

HOBO PROSPECTOR
Faith Heelers. Now you don't come
any closer. Y'wait fur me in this
here auto-mobile, here me? Them
Heelers don't like strangers much.

KOWALSKI
(jokingly)
Yep, Paw.

The old man is busy with his snake basket but he turns to KOWALSKI, almost angrily.

HOBO PROSPECTOR
Ain't kiddin'! An' they ain't
neither! Above all that man Jesse
Hovah --
(he points at the
Revivalist)

VIEWPOINT HOVAH

He stops singing when he sees the car.

HOBO PROSPECTOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
-- he's reel mean!

CLOSE UP HOVAH

And he looks it.

HOVAH'S POV

The CAMERA ZOOMS IN to a TWO-SHOT of KOWALSKI and the old man. IT STOPS for a moment. Then ZOOMS IN MORE to a BIG CLOSE UP of KOWALSKI.

KOWALSKI
Don't forget our deal.

ZOOM BACK to TWO-SHOT.

The old man looks at KOWALSKI in the eye.

HOBO PROSPECTOR
I ain't forgettin'.

He leaves the car and walks over to the meeting.

LONG SHOT HOVAH

As he spots the old man coming, he raises one hand to stop the music and the chanting. Music stops. He climbs down from the truck and comes frowning towards CAMERA. First the musicians, then all the revivalists look toward their leader.

FULL TWO-SHOT HOBO PROSPECTOR AND HOVAH

The old man smiles and puts his hand to HOVAH. But instead of shaking hands or saying hello--

HOVAH
You did it again!

HOBO PROSPECTOR
Well, Mr. Hovah, my truck broke down and --

HOVAH
I can do without your silly excuses. Who's that man?

HOBO PROSPECTOR

Like I was tellin' ya, Mr. Hovah,
my truck, she's not gettin' any
younger --

HOVAH

WHO'S THAT MAN!

HOBO PROSPECTOR

A friend.

HOVAH

A friend! How many times have I
told you not to bring aliens to our
meetings?

HOBO PROSPECTOR

I didn't bring him. He's bringin'
me over.

HOVAH

Give that to me!

(he grabs the basket
furiously)

And get rid of that man, you old
fool!

He goes back to the meeting. The old man walks slowly back to
the car.

EXT. MEETING DAY

Basket in hand, HOVAH goes into the expectant crowd. They
gather around him, forming an almost perfect ring. They are
all respectfully waiting.

FULL SHOT HOVAH

He stands in the middle of the ring, commanding every bit of
attention. Now very dramatically, slowly, he opens the
basket and delves into it with his left hand. Around him,
the crowd is still and silent.

CLOSE UP HOVAH

With a quick movement, he brings out one of the snakes. A
rattler. He grabs it firmly in his left hand and rubs the
wriggling snake all over his face, head and body. All of a
sudden he hurls the snake towards the ring.

HOVAH

(shouting)

Grab it --

FULL SHOT AN OLD WOMAN

Who catches the snake in mid-air.

HOVAH (CONT'D)
-- sinners!

The old woman is following HOVAH's teaching.

CLOSE UP HOVAH

Repeating his act.

HOVAH (CONT'D)
(shouting)
Heal thyself Healer!

FULL TWO-SHOT GIRL AND WOMAN

A young girl about twelve is dealing with a coral snake. She is half-terrified, half-fascinated. She lifts the writhing coral to her face and for a moment it looks as if it will bite her. But the girl finishes the ritual and amiably -- as if passing the salt sitting at table with elderly people -- she hands the snake to a woman standing next to her, who accepts the offering most casually.

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

As the old man, very slowly and reluctantly, reaches the car. KOWALSKI is watching the rite keenly.

HOBO PROSPECTOR
Sorry, son, but y'have to leave
right this vury minute.KOWALSKI
(still into the ritual)
What's that. A Healer's verion of
Russian roulette?HOBO PROSPECTOR
Yep.KOWALSKI
Very rough game!HOBO PROSPECTOR
An' h'its bound to get rougher yet.KOWALSKI
Doesn't anybody ever get killed?

HOBO PROSPECTOR

Well, that all depends--

KOWALSKI

Alright, alright! Don't tell me.
Now, what do I have to do to get
the hell out of here?

HOBO PROSPECTOR

You jest follow the Larrea belt.

KOWALSKI

The what belt?

The old man sees it is useless to make this man comprehend
the desert. He spits tobacco juice, then points West.

HOBO PROSPECTOR

Go thataway. Keep an eye always on
the trail of the sun - I mean,
don't loose yer shadow. Then when
ya see very tall saguaro cactuces,
don't lose 'em neither. That's the
Larrea belt. The saguaro and the
creosote tree'll lead ya back onto
the train of the earth.

KOWALSKI

An that's the road.

HOBO PROSPECTOR

That's the road. Y're beginnin' to
git the fundamentals of h'it.

KOWALSKI

Thanks, Paw.

(meaning it)

Thanks for everything.

The old man formally cleans his right palm on his vest to
shake hands with KOWALSKI.

HOBO PROSPECTOR

Y're welcome.

KOWALSKI

I hope I'll be seeing you again.

HOBO PROSPECTOR

Any time, son, any time. I'll be
around. Vaya con Dios!

KOWALSKI
(moved)
God bless, Paw.

INT. RADIO STUDIO DAY

Next to his tape-deck the ELEVATOR BOY is building stacks and piles of telegrams, notes etc. SUPER SPIC is in his place as usual, but he is resting, thinking and at the same time stroking his dog's head gently. In the BACKGROUND we see the ENGINEER, eagerly waiting.

ENGINEER (OVER INTERCOM)
Any time now, Super.

SUPER SPIC sighs with fatigue and restlessness, trying very hard to keep his cool.

SUPER SPIC
Not yet, not yet, my inter-
communicating friend.

ENGINEER
(vaguely cross)
Just tell me when you're ready.

SUPER SPIC
I'm ready. But he's not ready yet.

ENGINEER
What?

SUPER SPIC
Forget it. Yeah, I'll tell you
when I'm ready.

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

The car is halted not far from a lonely secondary road at the edge of the desert. KOWALSKI has just finished stripping the Galaxie of all its trimming of camouflage. The he gets in the car and drives towards the road, climbs onto it and screechingly tears off at the highest speed he can reach on the bumpy tarmac.

OVER IT we print another legend --

DEATH VALLEY

SATURDAY, 3:00 PM

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

Rolling along another secondary road in the Amargosa region.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

The same old KOWALSKI as at the beginning, happy to be on the road.

QUICK FLASH-FORWARD

INT/EXT. DRIVE-IN CAR-WASH DAY

The harsh reality of the dusty, dirty car under the desert sun.

EXT. BUS-STOP BY THE ROAD DAY

As the Galaxie goes past a solitary bust-stop.

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

He takes a good look at the stop.

VIEWPOINT MOVING SHOT

The bus-stop and next to it, a public phone booth.

FULL SHOT KOWALSKI

A hundred yards past the bus stop he has second thoughts about something and brusquely stops the car.

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

The car beginning to bak up towards the bus-stop.

CUT TO:

INT. SWITCHBOARD-ROOM (UTAH) DAY

A national telephone switchboard and several operators busily working at it.

CLOSE SHOT OPERATOR

She is trying to put an inter-state call through.

OPERATOR

Hello? Is that Denver 636 9395?
There's a long distance call for
you from Beatty, Nevada. It's a
collect call but the party won't
give his name. Are you prepared to
take it, sir?

(listening pause, then she
changes expression and
even smiles)

Very well, honey... Hellow Nevada?
Nevada this is Utah. Your party on
Denver 636 9395 is willing to
accept your call. You're through
now...

CUT TO:

INT. PHONE BOOTH DAYERSECTION (20 MILES AHEAD) DAY.

KOWALSKI is on the phone.

KOWALSKI

Jake? ... K here ... I knew you
knew.

(pause)

Not bad - considering... How are
you? ... Yeah? Well you should see
me now!

INT. JAKE'S PAD (DENVER) DAY

JAKE is speaking on the phone comfortably prone in bed. As he speaks the CAMERA PULLS BACK and we see the BLONDE and the BRUNETTE GROUPIES asleep on the other side of the bed, both apparently naked under bedsheets. His pad looks like the typical hippie-playboy's hand-out -- psychedelic murals, Indian rugs on the floor, very poor lighting, etc. There is one distinctive feature though. Right in the middle of the room we see his Harley Davidson 74. The CAMERA STOPS just [missing end of sentence].

JAKE

... well, baby, but then there's
that nice promotion you're having
all over the country. Man, you
sure are monopolizing media --
radio, television, the press --

FULL SHOT JAKE

With one bare foot he kicks a newspaper from the bed. When it lands on the floor we are able to see on it's front page KOWALSKI's photograph as a racing driver. Next to it there is an old photo of a beautiful young woman - VERA. The CAMERA PANS OVER to the paper and HOLDS BRIEFLY FAVOURING VERA'S PHOTO. The IT PANS BACK to JAKE.

JAKE (CONT'D)

-- the lot! If you ever think of getting back into car racing, I'd gladly be your manager.

(listening pause)

Well, you know, the same crap as before. Some good things, some nasty things and lotsa bullshit. They've even printed poor Vera's story plus her photo - Hello?... Hello K?

(concerned)

Are you still there?

CUT TO:

INT. PHONE BOOTH (NEVADA) DAY

KOWALSKI is indeed still there on the phone but very much brought down.

KOWALSKI

I'm alright, Jake, don't you worry. Listen, I phoned you only to tell you that I'm sorry I couldn't make it that I'm sorry I couldn't make it and that I'm glad you've won the bet. So it's a double-crop next time. One more thing. I want you to give a message to Blackie. How is he?

(pause)

Were they hard on him?... Good... Yeah, he's heavy. Well, you tell him not to worry. Tell him also the car will be delivered on time... yeah, that's all... Thanks for everything... You too, amigo. Seeya...

He hangs up.

EXT. PHONE AND BUS STOP DAY

When KOWALSKI comes out of the booth, there are two women at the bus-stop in the BACKGROUND, sheltering from the desert sun under the overheated concrete canopy as they wait for the bus -- apparently. As KOWALSKI leaves the SHOT, the CAMERA HOLDS MOMENTARILY on them.

FULL SHOT KOWALSKI

Who is about to get into this car.

VOICE (OFF)
Mister...?

It is a soft, low-keyed and feminine-husky voice. He turns around to face --

KOWALSKI'S POV

-- a tall dark elegant beauty.

KOWALSKI (V.O.)
Yes?

She hesitantly takes one step forward.

DARK BEAUTY
Excuse me, mister but -- could you please tell me please where you're heading for?

TWO SHOT KOWALSKI AND DARK BEAUTY

KOWALSKI seems to reflect about his actual destination.

KOWALSKI
(telling like it is)
Oh, anywhere around. Nowhere in particular. Why?

DARK BEAUTY
Could you -- would you give us girls a lift down to Beatty?

KOWALSKI looks at the tall girl's companion.

KOWALSKI'S POV (PANNING)

An old woman whose feet probably hurt.

GROUP SHOT

KOWALSKI thinks it over.

KOWALSKI

Well, be my guest. My guests.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

The OLD WOMAN gets into the back seat. But the DARK BEAUTY sits next to him. KOWALSKI drives off.

MOVING SHOT SECONDARY ROAD

The road is utterly empty of cars.

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

Going steady at cruising speed.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI is driving fast but carefully. Looking out for every intersection he is watching the road ahead and checking the road behind in the rear-view mirror, while not giving any sign of being in the least worried, so as not to alarm his passengers. The OLD WOMAN is seen dozing in the BACKGROUND and DARK BEAUTY is looking at him in a quiet, friendly way. But the moment she speaks, we have the vague sensation-- perhaps triggered by her own voice - of the precise premonition that something evil is coming this way.

DARK BEAUTY

(almost in a whisper)

Is something wrong?

KOWALSKI is startled but does not show it - yet.

KOWALSKI

No. Why, should there be?

DARK BEAUTY looks at him intently.

DARK BEAUTY

Well, you're so silent and moody.

KOWALSKI

(chuckling)

Then that must be in my character.

DARK BEAUTY silently stares at KOWALSKI for a moment. Then--

DARK BEAUTY

(menacingly?)

What are you laughing at?

KOWALSKI looks at her, surprised.

KOWALSKI
I'm not laughing.

DARK BEAUTY
Yes you are. Inside yourself.

KOWALSKI
(mock-surprise)
Wow!

But she is dead-pan serious. Now, point-blank --

DARK BEAUTY
Are you laughing because you think
I'm really a man in drag?

KOWALSKI almost jumps but he controls himself. He cannot help blushing though.

DARK BEAUTY (CONT'D)
Isn't that right?

He takes some time to answer.

KOWALSKI
No. You're wrong. I was actually
thinking you're quite impressive.
As a woman, I mean.

DARK BEAUTY
Do you actually believe it?

KOWALSKI
Yes.

DARK BEAUTY
Why, thank you!

KOWALSKI
You're welcome.

As if she has already finished analyzing KOWALSKI, the dark tall woman is now inspecting the Galaxie. She runs a finger over the fascia.

DARK BEAUTY
(almost to herself)
Nice car.
(with sexual overtones?)
Nice and brand-new.

She keeps running her finger over the dashboard - an in a flash she opens the glove compartment. Inquisitively her hand delves into it.

KOWALSKI
What's this?

She takes the revolver out, holding in delicately with forefinger and thumb as if it were a dangerous but fragile reptile.

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

KOWALSKI has been engrossed in watching the road. But now he turns to pay sudden attention to DARK BEAUTY.

KOWALSKI (CONT'D)
Watch out! It's loaded!

Only he is a few seconds too late. We see a new surprise in his face.

CLOSE UP DARK BEAUTY

She is holding the gun very properly and even more expertly pointing it at KOWALSKI

TWO SHOT DARK BEAUTY AND KOWALSKI

He is still unaware of her intention.

KOWALSKI (CONT'D)
Don't play with guns, honey! That can be dangerous.

DARK BEAUTY
Only to you, honey.

Her coy contralto voice turns into a brazen baritone.

DARK BEAUTY (CONT'D)
This is a stick-up, mister!

GROUP SHOT KOWALSKI AND PASSENGERS

KOWALSKI is laughing like a mad man - until he notices the OLD WOMAN very much alert and moving from her distant corner to sit right behind him.

OLD WOMAN
(to DARK BEAUTY)
Why is this man laughing?

DARK BEAUTY
Don't ask me, ask him.

The OLD WOMAN turns viciously to KOWALSKI and grabs him by the hair.

OLD WOMAN
What are you laughing at honey boy?

She pulls back his hair.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)
Tell me, tell me!
(she grabs one of
KOWALSKI's ears and
shouts into it)
TELL ME!
(to DARK BEAUTY)
He won't tell.

DARK BEAUTY
He will - eventually.

OLD WOMAN
He won't. He's being mysterious.

DARK BEAUTY
He will. Now!
(to KOWALSKI)
Alright, misterioso, pull up!

But instead of stopping the car, KOWALSKI accelerates brusquely, throwing the OLD WOMAN back into the seat. Then he brakes suddenly, fiercely hurling DARK BEAUTY's head banging on the windshield, and at the same time so placing his right arm that when OLD WOMAN is jerked forward by the momentum, she hits her face against his elbow. Her nose cracks. KOWALSKI is next hitting DARK BEAUTY with the butt of the gun, snatching her wig off. She is not a dark beauty after all. She - or rather, he - has receding blond hair. KOWALSKI knocks her out with the same blow. The he springs out of the car, opens the back door and, grabbing the OLD WOMAN by the hair, he drags her out.

OLD CLERK
(crying)
Don't! Don't do that! It hurts!
This hair is all my own! Stop
that! Please don't! Stop it
please!

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI is pushing the OLD WOMAN onto the side of the road. Then he comes back to the car and opens the passenger's door to pull the unconscious, balding, formerly dark beauty out of the car. After letting her go on the pavement, he jumps back into the car and without even bothering to close the doors, dashes away, the Galaxie tearing off at 90 m.p.h.. The doors slam shut all by themselves.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP THE TELEPHONE OPERATOR

She is speaking on the phone. But she does not look like an ordinary operator girl. CAMERA PULLS BACK and we see she is a police officer. She is in charge of communications at the the --

INT. CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL HEADQUARTERS DAY

This room looks like no other communications centre so far. As the CAMERA KEEPS ON PULLING BACK we see an electronically-operated route map of the State, where every single road is clearly marked. / TV monitors receiving signals from concealed cameras and helicopters covering the main roads. / Radar charts connected to scanners operating on different US super-highways. / Direct communications with check-points on all routes across state boundaries. Special double-line communications with the Mexican border. Every information or communication contraption is being operated by policewomen.

When the SHOT OPENS the WOMAN COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER is listening attentively, even politely. Then she speaks in a rather aggressive monotone to intercept the line curtly.

WOMAN OFFICER

... The general consensus around here is that instead of cutting him off what you people over there have done is to present this outlaw with a lot of free publicity which is by the by detrimental to the public image of the police force, wasteful with the taxpayers money and unfair to all law-abiding drivers, who are a majority, thank God.

(listening pause

Well, we don't call them 'mothers' or 'speed freaks' around here.

(MORE)

WOMAN OFFICER (CONT'D)
But we do have some experience in
dealing with all kinds of highway
delinquents.

(pause)
Yes, we've been previously informed
of all that... Thank you anyway.
Over and out.

As she speaks the CAMERA PULLS IN to the STARTING EMPLACEMENT
and the SCENE ENDS with CLOSE UP of the telephonist, as she
unplugs the line.

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

The car rushing through barren landscapes on a solitary and
inadequate road. The sun is going down.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI is upset and tired, fatigue beginning to undermine
his determination.

ON SOUND: Pop. When the number is over--

SUPER SPIC (V.O.)
Hello, Kowalski.

Almost knowingly, KOWALSKI smiles as if meeting an old
friend.

KOWALSKI
Hi.

SUPER SPIC (V.O.)
Welcome back.

KOWALSKI
Thank you.

SUPER SPIC (V.O.)
Like I told you, you're welcome.

INSERT RADIO AND LOUDSPEAKER

The disembodied voice is sensed by KOWALSKI like a real
presence.

SUPER SPIC (CONT'D)
May I call you K?

CROSS CUTTING KOWALSKI AND SUPER SPIC

(* From now on, SUPER SPIC is not heard on VOICE OVER any more but on DIRECT SOUND - even when his voice comes over the radio.)

KOWALSKI nods.

KOWALSKI
Yeah, sure.

CLOSE UP SUPER SPIC

He senses KOWALSKI's connection with the physical immediacy of ESP.

SUPER SPIC
How are you feeling, K?

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

- to whom the interplay of questions and answers is as natural as the landscape.

KOWALSKI
Tired.

SUPER SPIC
Yeah, I bet you're tired.

KOWALSKI
What's happening?

KOWALSKI waits for SUPER SPIC to answer as he could expect his car to respond to his control - mechanically logical.

SUPER SPIC
Well - I guess by now you must have gathered that the highway patrol traced your Denver call back to Beatty. Big Brother is not so much watching as listening in. You know that. What you probably don't know is that they found these two - let's say - ladies - on the road. Pretty battered both of them. They must have had an accident or something. But some smart-ass put the pressure on them to try and charge you with some ugly crime. Let's say assault and battery - nasty things like that. But the ladies in question refused to comply. Or as my alter ego would put it - sticking to their guns.

KOWALSKI smiles slightly.

SUPER SPIC (CONT'D)
But that's not the reason for this special delivery of mine. I'm talking to you to tell you that some party or parties are busily preparing a welcoming committee in the Sunshine State. As you may well have expected, the main door is heavily embellished.

KOWALSKI is bothered by this news.

SUPER SPIC (CONT'D)
But some other doors and even windows of the stately mansion are full of guardians and fuzzy frills, if you see what I mean...

KOWALSKI nods concernedly.

KOWALSKI
I know what you mean.

The CAMERA HOLDS on him.

EXT. STREET (DOWNTOWN RENO) DAY

Two cars are parking not far from KOW Station. We recognize the street as the one in which we saw SUPER SPIC approaching the station.

FULL TWO SHOT THE CARS

Seven dangerous-looking men are getting out of them. They assemble outside the car and walk fast towards the station.

EXT. STATION BUILDING DAY

Before they arrive, one of the men gives a signal.

GROUP SHOT MEN

All of them bring out half-stockings and pulls them over their faces, like ad hoc masks.

CLOSE UP LEADER

Just before he dons his mask, we identify him as the YOUNG PATROLMAN in plain clothes.

INT. MAIN ENTRANCE DAY

The gang raid the station's main entrance. With muffled shouting like "This is a hold up" and "Don't move!" theyu immobilize the DOORMAN, the RECEPTIONIST and then cover the elevator. The LEADER takes three men with him to the upper floor.

INT. HALLWAY DAY

They come out of the elevator holding the ELEVATOR BOY as a hostage. The LEADER signals at the door in the BACKGROUND. The ON THE AIR sign is lit. When the sign goes off, LEADER order the SECOND RAIDER to take care of the dog, silently. The SECOND RAIDER opens the door with a gas gun in his hand.

INT. ANTE ROOM DAY

The dog stands up, growling. Deftly SECOND RAIDER knocks him unconscious. The rest of the gang comes in, pushing the ELEVATOR BOY into the studio.

ON SOUND: Lous rock music.

LEADER

Alright, don't move anybody or
we'll shoot. And we mean buisness!

SUPER SPIC is speechless for the first time in his life. With ruthless brutality the LEADER grips SUPER SPIC's arm to make him stand up, then pushes him against the wall.

LEADER (CONT'D)
Come on, you sonofabitch!

SUPER SPIC
The name is Super Spic.

LEADER looks at him, then suddenly punches him in the stomach. SUPER SPIC staggers. LEADER thrusts him away from the tape-deck.

LEADER
Hands on the wall and feet wide
apart, chicano!

SUPER SPIC obeys, fumbling and shaking all over, completely at a loss. The ELEVATOR BOY tries to help him.

LEADER (CONT'D)
(to Elevator Boy)
That goes for you too, shit-lover!

LEADER orders SECOND RAIDER to take over the microphone. SECOND RAIDER sits in the speaker's chair and grabs the microphone. Then he lifts his mask from his mouth, obviously getting ready to broadcast.

INT. CONTROL ROOM .

THIRD RAIDER is watching the ENGINEER very closely. As the record comes to an end ON SOUND, the ENGINEER conveys by gesture that he must take care of the control-panel. The assailant assents. The ENGINEER fiddles with some knobs, then gropes for a rather inaccessible tape.

INSERT SLEEVE AND SWITCH

He 'accidentally' switches off the entire transmission.

CUT TO:

INT. GALAXIE DAY

The car's radio goes suddenly mute and KOWALSKI is particularly struck by the uncommon, uncomfortable silence. He reaches for his amphetamines - only to remember that he has none left. He looks for a cigarette in every pocket.

INSERT ASHTRAY

He is fishing for a butt.

FULL SHOT KOWALSKI

He puts a filthy cigarette end to his lips but has to spit it out, revolted. KOWALSKI becomes restless, as if feeling cooped up in his car for the first time in the film. He lowers the windows. Then he happens to look into the rear-view mirror.

INSERT REAR-VIEW MIRROR

A motor-cycle is trailing the Galaxie.

FULL SHOT KOWALSKI

He pulls over to one side. He switches both engine and radio off, relieved, almost happy that everything is finally over. Patiently, he waits for the speed cop to pull up.

ON SOUND: The droning noise coming closer, closer, closer.
Then stopping. We wait next for heavy footsteps --- but
there are none. Then --

VOICE (OFF)
Kowalski?

He turns.

KOWALSKI'S POV

It is not a speed cop but a speed freak - a Hell's Angel rather. A young man with long blonde hair falling down his shoulders, wearing white levis with Tangerine Day-Glo vertical stripes painted on them. Nothing more - his torso is naked and his feet shoeless. The Angel smiles a wide open smile of even teeth all gleaming white - except one, a frontal tooth with orange vertical stripes engraved on it.

ANGEL
Hi man!

TWO SHOT LOWALSKI AND ANGEL

KOWALSKI is not exactly relieved, disappointed rather.

KOWALSKI
I thought you were the fuzz.

ANGEL
On c'mon, man!

KOWALSKI
Sorry.

ANGEL
Don't bother. I guess you're entitled to some paranoid shit after all.

KOWALSKI smiles at the understatement.

KOWALSKI
Guess you're right.

ANGEL
Yeah man.

KOWALSKI
Yeah.

ANGEL
Need any help?

KOWALSKI reflects some before answering.

KOWALSKI

Got any caps?

ANGEL

Speed?

KOWALSKI

Yeah.

ANGEL

Not with me. I've been busted too many times recently. At my pad, yes.

(scratching his head)

Hey man, why don't you come with me? You can follow me in your car.

KOWALSKI

Far from here?

ANGEL

No, man, just a couple miles back.

KOWALSKI thinks about the proposition.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD DAY

ANGEL is leading, riding a rainbow-painted machine. KOWALSKI is following him in his car.

CUT TO:

EXT. DIRT ROAD DAY

The GALAXIE following the motorcycle on a very rough dirt road.

EXT. TRAILER DAY

The little convoy is stopping next to a small wheeled-house which is less than a trailer and not much more than a side-car - obviously a caravan to be towed by a motor-cycle. Parts of motor-cycles, engines, even an almost totally cannibalized car surround the caravan, giving it the appearance of a tool-shack converted into a house.

NEW ANGLE. FAVOURING ANGEL

He makes signs to KOWALSKI to park the car behind the caravan. KOWALSKI does so.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI turns off the engine.

ON SOUND: A distant drone over the music coming through the radio.

KOWALSKI is attracted by the noise and distracted by what he sees.

KOWALSKI's POV

Not very far away but far enough for the noise of her machine to be muffled, there is a girl riding naked, her very long hair blowing wildly, her little body as free as the wind, her performance a living contrast to the desert. The CAMERA LINGERS.

ON SOUND: Over the radio the Dixieland Jug Blowers are playing Banjoreno.

TWO SHOT KOWALSKI AND ANGEL

Like years later, ANGEL rushes out with the amphetamines plus that luxury in the desert, a big glass of water. KOWALSKI takes three pills from the small bottle and swallows them dry. Then he chases the pill with big gulps of water, drinking it all.

KOWALSKI

Thanks!

ANGEL

More water?

KOWALSKI

No, that's OK.

He passes the glass and the bottle back to the ANGEL.

ANGEL

You can keep the speed. I have some more left.

KOWALSKI

I won't be needing all those.

ANGEL

Just take what you need.

KOWALSKI takes some more pills and drops them in his shirt pocket. He gives the bottle back to ANGEL.

KOWALSKI
(smiling)
Thanks a lot.

Then, over the radio --

SUPER SPIC
(faked)
Person to person call for Kowalski!

Both KOWALSKI and ANGEL listen attentively.

SUPER SPIC (CONT'D)
(faked)
Kowalski, this is to inform you of
the latest developments.
Correction to my last delivery.
All the main doors are closed,
except one. This one opens to
Sonora. Repeat, the only door left
open leads to -- I know you're
gonna die laughing -- to Last
Chance.

ANGEL leaps with joy.

ANGEL
But that's just a few minutes from
here! Wow, man, you're gonna make
it!

But KOWALSKI is not so optimistic. He keeps his ear to the radio.

SUPER SPIC
(faked)
-- or some Oasis around there...

KOWALSKI
Tell me, you familiar with this
DJ's voice?

ANGEL
Super Spic's? Yeah, sure man.
Why?

ANGEL pays closer attention to the radio.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
Sounds OK to me. He's probably got
a cold or somethin' but that's his
voice.

KOWALSKI
I wonder...

ANGEL
Hold on a second, willya?

He emits a long piercing whistling towards the nude rider,
then he waves her to come over.

VIEWPOINT

The girl riding back to the caravan. She does have a perfect
figure, her skin beautifully bronzed all over.

GROUP SHOT. ANGEL, KOWALSKI AND NUDE RIDER

She halts beside the car but does not dismount. She does not
care a bit either about her nudity or about KOWALSKI's
presence.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
Listen to this.

She listens.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
Who's that?

NUDE RIDER
Super, who else.

She has a voice to match her figure. ANGEL turns to
KOWALSKI. He is still not convinced.

ANGEL
Are you sure?

NUDE RIDER
But yes!

KOWALSKI
Absolutely sure?

The GIRL listens even more attentively.

NUDE RIDER
Well - hang on.
(pause)
(MORE)

NUDE RIDER (CONT'D)

Maybe there's something different
somewhere.

(longer pause)

Don't know. Seems - little bit -
squarish. I know: It's too
mechanical, that's it!

ANGEL looks at KOWALSKI.

ANGEL

You sensing a trap or somethin'
man?

KOWALSKI

Sort of.

ANGEL

Wait for me to come back then!

He runs towards his bike and jumps onto it. Without
hesitation, he rides away. KOWALSKI stays in the car.

TWO SHOT KOWALSKI AND NUDE RIDER

She looks at him and smiles. He smiles back.

NUDE RIDER

You gonna stay with us?

KOWALSKI

Don't think so.

NUDE RIDER

(biggie smile)

Somethin' I can do for you?

KOWALSKI

Like what?

NUDE RIDER

(suggestively)

You name it.

KOWALSKI

Can't think of anything

NUDE RIDER

(more openly)

You don't fancy me?

KOWALSKI

Yeah, very much.

NUDE RIDER
Groovy baby!

She dismounts to come over to the car. She displays her body for KOWALSKI. She comes even closer.

NUDE RIDER (CONT'D)
Feel like havin' a ball?

KOWALSKI
But not now.

She cannot comprehend him.

NUDE RIDER
No, really?

KOWALSKI
Some other time.

NUDE RIDER
Any time.

She is going back to her machine.

KOWALSKI
Thanks all the same.

NUDE RIDER
That's OK.
(half-turning)
Something' else you want?

KOWALSKI
No - yes.

She turns around completely, waiting.

KOWALSKI (CONT'D)
How about a cigarette?

But she is not even disappointed.

NUDE RIDER
I'll roll one for you.

KOWALSKI
No, a straight one.

NUDE RIDER
Straight?

KOWALSKI
Yes. If I can.

NUDE RIDER
Sure you can.

She goes into the house, slowly. The comes - ever so slowly - back with a packet of cigarettes and some kind of portrait.

NUDE RIDER (CONT'D)
Here. Keep the pack.

KOWALSKI
Can I?

NUDE RIDER
Sure you can!

KOWALSKI
Thanks a lot.

NUDE RIDER
Don't mention it.

KOWALSKI opens the pack anxiously to take a cigarette. He lights it, smoking avidly. He feels instantly relaxed. NUDE RIDER takes a good look at him, then at the portrait she is holding.

NUDE RIDER (CONT'D)
(off-handedly)
You haven't changed much.

KOWALSKI
What?

NUDE RIDER
I said you haven't changed much.

KOWALSKI
Haven't I?

NUDE RIDER
Here.

She shows the portrait to KOWALSKI.

INSERT PORTRAIT

It is a photo cut from a magazine and pasted on cardboard. In this photograph KOWALSKI, dressed as a policeman, is lighting a cigarette. He is on the street in front of an official looking building and, before him, a crowd of young people is watching him light the cigarette, with the utmost attention. The cigarette is actually a marihuana stick.

NUDE RIDER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Too much, man!

TWO SHOT FAVOURING NUDE RIDER

KOWALSKI smiles at her.

KOWALSKI
It's been a long time now.

NUDE RIDER
I know. I pasted it up when it
first came out. When I cut it out -
I -

She stops and says no more. Then she turns around and goes back to the house, languidly. Moments later she comes out again, ever so slowly. Without even looking at KOWALSKI, she mounts the bike and rides into the desert, towards the violent sunset.

ON SOUND: The Five Harmonics are playing "What Makes my Baby Cry," paroxysms of harmonica, ukelele, jug, washboard, banjo and kazoo.

CUT TO:

INT. GALAXIE DUSK

It is almost night when KOWALSKI - quietly smoking in the car and listening to the radio - hears a drone approaching.

VIEWPOINT

It is the boy's motor-cycle.

TWO SHOT ANGEL AND KOWALSKI

ANGEL pulls up beside the car.

ANGEL
(sadly)
You were dead right, man.
(then angrily)
He's sold you out to the pigs, the
fink!

KOWALSKI
What happened?

ANGEL

There's a roadblock. It all looks very innocent, with cars on both sides of the fence - like they were tourists or something'. But it's a roadblock alright.

ANGEL bangs his fist against the bike's headlight.

ANGEL (CONT'D)

Shit!

(he stops himself short -
he has just hit on a
idea))

I've got it, man! I've got it!

He dismounts in a flash and runs into the caravan.

CUT TO:

EXT. ON THE BORDER NIGHT

Cars gathering on the Nevada side of the state borderline. Anyone standing on this spot dominates a big stretch of the road into Nevada.

GROUP SHOT MEN

Though they wear civilian clothes they look very much like vigilantes.

FULL SHOT VIGILANTE

Under a wide-brimmed hat we recognize the OLD PATROLMAN, as a plainclothesman. He is scanning the Nevada scrubland. He sees something.

VIEWPOINT

Car lights coming up in the distance.

EXT. ROADBLOCK NIGHT

Hurriedly, the OLD PATROLMAN orders his men to install heavy barriers at the boundary line.

GROUP SHOT CAR

Other cars stand by, engines running.

LONG SHOT ROAD TO NEVADA

The approaching headlights are coming closer, perhaps two miles away only.

ON SOUND: A hopped up engine roaring in the night.

GROUP SHOT VIGILANTES

Waiting in and out of the cars for the Galaxie to come.

1ST VIGILANTE
(to Old Patrolman)
Hey, that's a funny-looking --

CLOSER VIEWPOINT

There is a red light flashing on top of this car.

ON SOUND: A distant siren wailing.

TWO SHOT VIGILANTE AND OLD PATROLMAN

OLD PATROLMAN
It's a patrol car!

NEW VIEWPOINT

A patrol car, heading at full speed towards the barricade. Or so it seems.

GROUP SHOT VIGILANTES

ON SOUND: Siren closer and closer.

2ND VIGILANTE
Looks like - a federal patrol car.

OLD PATROLMAN
The barricade!
(to Vigilantes)
Lift the barricade! Clear the road! At the double!

Frantically, almost madly, the barricade is lifted - just in the nick of time.

EXT. BORDER NIGHT

The car arriving and speeding across the border. But it is not a federal patrol car. It is --

FULL MOVING SHOT CAR

-- the Galaxie. With some contraption - like a grid - on top, where a red bulb is intermittently flashing on and off.

INT. GALAXIE NIGHT

ANGEL is still winding a mechanical sire, then he is jumping up and down like a madman.

ANGEL
WE'VE GONE IT! We've done it
Kowalski. We did it beautifully!

KOWALSKI is smiling, then looking back.

KOWALSKI'S POV MOVING SHOT

The fooled vigilantes being left behind more and more.

ON SOUND: KOWALSKI's boisterous laugh.

CUT TO:

EXT. GALAXIE NIGHT

The car stopping on the side of the road, some miles further into California.

INT. GALAXIE NIGHT

KOWALSKI looks at ANGEL very warmly.

KOWALSKI
Well, I think you can go back now?

ANGEL
Sure?

KOWALSKI
Positive.

ANGEL
You'll probably be needin' me
again.

KOWALSKI
Not here. This is California,
baby!

He slaps ANGEL on the leg as a goodbye sign.

ANGEL
OK.

As if cross because the party is over, ANGEL gets out to unstrap the contraption on top. He reappears in the passenger's window.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
You want this?

He shows him the siren.

KOWALSKI
Keep it for some other time.

ANGEL nods and smiles at that.

EXT. GALAXIE NIGHT

He finishes unstrapping the ad hoc grid - which is a folding motor-cycle, its headlight covered with red cellophane.

INT. CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL HEADQUARTERS NIGHT

Two women officers are studying the electronic map.

INSERT ELECTRONIC MAP

All the red bulbs at the borderline corners go green at once, then red dots mark a last-minute progress-form - Oasis to Zurick to Route 6-395 heading for Bishop.

ON SOUND: Buzzes, clicks and ticks, like a noisy hubris.

INT. GALAXIE NIGHT

KOWALSKI is driving fast, when he notices something ahead.

VIEWPOINT

A glowing fire, like city lights in the distance.

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

Eager to arrive, then disappointed.

EXT. HIGHWAY (THROUGH WINDSHIELD) NIGHT

A stretch of the road fully lit with anti-fog lights.

EXT. FOGGY STRETCH NIGHT

The Galaxie speeds through.

LONG MOVING SHOT LAMP POSTS

Just before the lights are gone, underneath a lamp, there is somebody, apparently hitch-hiking.

FULL SHOT HITCH-HIKER

It is a girl who is hitch-hiking with a very despondent technique. She is not even looking at the oncoming cars and beside her there is a sign painted on a piece of cardboard -- THE COAST - EAST OR WEST. She is very tall, dressed all in black - black bell bottom pyjamas, an enormous black bag hanging from one shoulder, and a big flopping wide-brimmed black felt hat on her head. On the ground there is a much travelled, battered brown suitcase where the cardboard is propped.

INT. GALAXIE NIGHT

The car approaching the girl, then about to drive past her, when abruptly - almost without know why - KOWALSKI comes to a stop. In the BACKGROUND the girl does not even look at his car. KOWALSKI lowers a window.

KOWALSKI
Wanna lift?

CLOSE UP HITCH-HIKER

She turns to look at him. She is coloured.

CROSS CUTTING HITCH-HIKER AND KOWALSKI

HITCH-HIKER
Eh?

KOWALSKI
I said d'you want a lift?

HITCH-HIKER
(vaguely interested)
Where to?

KOWALSKI
(amused)
I'm heading for Frisco.

HITCH-HIKER
Where?

KOWALSKI has to smile.

KOWALSKI
San Francisco.

She is not too keen on it.

HITCH-HIKER
Oh, well -- OK.

Langourously, she picks her suit-case up and her sign, and very slowly, almost reluctantly, drags herself towards the car. She is the coolest ever hitch-hiker.

INT. GALAXIE NIGHT

When she gets into the car she almost forgets to close the door. KOWALSKI has to raise the window for her. The car starts. She sits apart from KOWALSKI, looking out of the window, her felt hat shading her head and neck. She is utterly silent.

KOWALSKI
Have you been waiting a long time?

She does not answer. At least, not immediately. When she speaks she does not bother to face KOWALSKI.

HITCH-HIKER
I don't feel like being social
tonight.

KOWALSKI
(amiably)
That's alright with me.

KOWALSKI concentrates on driving. Once in a while he looks at her, always hunched up in her corner.

KOWALSKI (CONT'D)
Something wrong with you?

HITCH-HIKER
(without looking at him)
No. Why, should there be?

KOWALSKI
You look sullen and hunched up in
that corner.

HITCH-HIKER
I feel comfortable here.

KOWALSKI

Good.

HITCH-HIKER

And I don't feel like talking.

KOWALSKI

OK, OK!

A few seconds later.

HITCH-HIKER

Excuse me. I didn't mean to be
rude.

CLOSE UP HITCH-HIKER

She turns to KOWALSKI. She is young, slender and beautiful, with big almond-shaped eyes, above very high cheekbones and an exquisitely shaped mouth. She looks like an Indian or Indonesian but she is Negro. Her long, narrow neck disappears beneath a wide slit in the pyjama blouse, open so that through it, when the car takes a curve, you can see her lovely small breasts. She has a remote, ancient aura about her, like a Nubian priestess stranded in the 20th century.

TWO SHOT KOWALSKI and HITCH-HIKER

He is fascinated. She thinks he is sore.

HITCH-HIKER (CONT'D)

Honestly.

KOWALSKI

I know.

He is so taken by her aura that he unprofessionally stops looking at the road to stare at her.

HITCH-HIKER

(meaning the road)

Be careful.

KOWALSKI

I can take care of that.

HITCH-HIKER

I know you can.

She is once more silent. KOWALSKI keeps on driving. Some few smiles later, she begins to look for something in her whale of a bag. She finds it, finally.

HITCH-HIKER (CONT'D)
Do you mind if I smoke?

KOWALSKI
Of course not.

HITCH-HIKER
But, I mean this.

She shows him a marihuana stick, so long nad thick that it looks like a bleached cigar. KOWALSKI is momentarily speechless.

SUBLIMINAL FLASHBACK

VERA, small and frail and unbelievably white, is asking him the same question in a car, the blinding ocean light coming through the window, in a weird MUTE SCENE.

INT. GALAXIE NIGHT

KOWALSKI comes back from his trip.

KOWALSKI
By all means.

The girl is not fully convinced.

HITCH-HIKER
If you don't want, it's alright --

KOWALSKI
(overlapping)
Oh no, baby, I don't mind at all!

HITCH-HIKER
(overlapping)
-- it's only that I'm so tired I
can't sleep!

KOWALSKI
Go ahead, smoke your --
(he looks at the cigar-
joint)
-- white Havana in peace.

She only smiles. But when she lights the stick, the smile is still there, mysterious, remote, ancient.

KOWALSKI (CONT'D)
Happy dreams.

HITCH-HIKER

Thank you.

They both fall silent, KOWALSKI driving, the ancient HITCH-HIKER smoking, inhaling, swallowing the hallucinogenic haze.

EXT. HIGHWAY NIGHT

The Galaxie passes in front of a black box by the road.

INSERT ELECTRONIC MAP

A little red light makes a definite progression on the groove marking the highway.

INT. GALAXIE NIGHT

The Negro girl is asleep, her stick gone out in her hand, her head leaning on the window-pane. KOWALSKI is beginning to feel sleepy, probably drowsing after breathing too much smoke from the girl's joint.

CLOSE UP KOWALSKY

He can barely keep his eyes open. He tries to open a window. But it is such a heavy job. Even trying to take a pill from his pocket is an impossible feat. Shaking his head clear sees -

POV --

A patch of earth beside the highway, like an inviting field to land in.

EXT. GALAXIE NIGHT

KOWALSKI turns off the gas. The girl wakes up with a jolt.

HITCH-HIKER

What - what happened?

KOWALSKI

Nothing.

She looks out of the car.

HITCH-HIKER

Why have we stopped?

KOWALSKI
I feel so - stoned - I couldn't go
on driving.

The girl looks at her stick as if she had forgotten it.

HITCH-HIKER
Oh, I'm sorry.

KOWALSKI
It's OK. I'll be fit again in a
few minutes.

He opens the window.

ON SOUND: The sounds of the night come through it --
crickets, the wind in the trees, a night bird screaming.

HITCH-HIKER
It's nice in here.

KOWALSKI
Uh-huh.

She looks at him as if noticing her for the first time.

HITCH-HIKER
What are you?

KOWALSKI
A delivery driver.

HITCH-HIKER
I mean your sign.

KOWALSKI
Oh, I don't know.

HITCH-HIKER
When were you born, the month?

KOWALSKI
April 22.

HITCH-HIKER
Taurus. Just what I thought.

KOWALSKI
Yeah?

HITCH-HIKER
What's your name?

KOWALSKI
Kowalski.

HITCH-HIKER
Sorry, I mean the first name.

KOWALSKI
Koawalski.

HITCH-HIKER
Kowalski Kowalski?

KOWALSKI
Just Kowalski. First, last and
only name.

HITCH-HIKER
Funny.

KOWALSKI
Very. What's yours?

HITCH-HIKER
(mysterious?)
I'll tell you later.

KOWALSKI
When? In Frisco?

HITCH-HIKER
Sometime before that.

KOWALSKI
(jokingly)
Is that a promise?

She smiles.

HITCH-HIKER
Yes.
(pause)
I like you. I like you, Kowalski.
Period.

KOWALSKI
I like you too.

They both look into each other's eyes. KOWALSKI takes her hand - and extremely long and beautiful hand. He comes closer.

KOWALSKI (CONT'D)

Do you mind?

HITCH-HIKER

Oh, no! I was waiting for you.
I've been waiting for you a long,
long time. How I waited for you!

KOWALSKI

Where? Since when?

HITCH-HIKER

Oh, everywhere and since forever.
I was actually waiting for you
under that lamp.

KOWALSKI

(almost facetiously)

Really?

HITCH-HIKER

Yes. As a matter of fact, I was
only waiting for you. I wouldn't
have gotten into any other car than
yours.

KOWALSKI

I'd never have guessed.

HITCH-HIKER

Why not?

KOWALSKI

You didn't look that way.

HITCH-HIKER

(as if to herself)

Patiently. That's the only way to
wait for somebody.

KOWALSKI stops being facetious. He looks at her
questioningly. He is staring at her.

HITCH-HIKER (CONT'D)

Don't look at me like that, I'm
blushing.

KOWALSKI

You're not.

HITCH-HIKER

You can't see it but I feel it!

KOWALSKI

Let me kiss you.

HITCH-HIKER

Kiss me.

KOWALSKI

I mean for you to take off your
hat.

HITCH-HIKER

You won't like me then.

KOWALSKI

I will.

HITCH-HIKER

You won't.

KOWALSKI

Yes I will. I like Afro hair.

HITCH-HIKER

It isn't that. You won't like it.
I know you won't.

KOWALSKI

Try me.

HITCH-HIKER

OK, you asked for it.

She takes her hat off - and she is bald-headed, her head shaved all over. KOWALSKI is surprised but tries to conceal it.

HITCH-HIKER (CONT'D)

See?

She tries to put her hat back on. He stops her. She looks strikingly attractive. KOWALSKI will not release her hand.

KOWALSKI

But I still think you're beautiful.

HITCH-HIKER

I'm a freak.

KOWALSKI

Probably, but a sexy one.

She smiles. She flings her hat on the back seat.

HITCH-HIKER

As a matter of fact, I haven't
decided yet.

(MORE)

HITCH-HIKER (CONT'D)
Sometimes I think I'm a freak.
Sometimes I think I'm of the
future.

KOWALSKI
The Eve of the Future.

HITCH-HIKER
Something like that. But also of
the past--

KOWALSKI
(overlapping)
Anyway I think you're lovely.

HITCH-HIKER
(overlapping)
-- but not Eve.
(on his last remark)
Do you?

KOWALSKI
Yes!

They kiss passionately, longingly, as if indeed they have
been waiting for each other for a long time.

FULL TWO SHOT

She lies down on the seat but she is so tall that when she
stretches out her long legs, she unintentionally kicks the
radio with her boot -

INSERT RADIO

-- an knocks the volume button off.

TWO CLOSE SHOT

KOWALSKI is taking her clothes off, making love to her,
letting himself go completely.

INT. HIGHWAY HQ NIGHT

Several women officers silently attending to the equipment in
the wee hours.

ON SOUND: The whole room humming with a strange melody of
tele-typers, mute monitors and computers.

INT. GALAXIE NIGHT

KOWALSKI is asleep in the car. The HITCH-HICKER is wearing her clothes, hat and all. She looks exactly as she was when he first met her. She lights her stick again, calmly. After a few draws she leans against him.

HITCH-HIKER
Kowalski?

He is half-asleep, half-drugged.

HITCH-HIKER (CONT'D)
K?

From very far inside himself he answers - slowly.

KOWALSKI
Y-yes?

HITCH-HIKER
Do you still want to know my name?

Does he? He really does not care. What he wants to do is sleep.

KOWALSKI
Yes.

HITCH-HIKER
I can tell you now.

KOWALSKI
Tell me.

HITCH-HIKER
But before telling you my name, I want you to know where I was heading for.

What is she talking about now?

KOWALSKI
I know that.

HITCH-HIKER
Then you tell me.

KOWALSKI
You were going - East and West.

HITCH-HIKER
Is that possible?

KOWALSKI tries to wake up completely.

HITCH-HIKER (CONT'D)

Is it?

KOWALSKI

No, wait. I know now. Frisco.

HITCH-HIKER

San Francisco, yes.

KOWALSKI smiles.

KOWALSKI

I remember. You told me.

HITCH-HIKER

You told me.

KOWALSKI

Did I?

HITCH-HIKER

Yes.

KOWALSKI

Yes--no! I didn't tell you, I only asked you.

HITCH-HIKER

You told me you were going to San Francisco and then I climbed into your car. But if you'd've told me Fresno or Los Angeles or even Honolulu, I would have gotten into your car, because I'm just going where you are going. That's what my sign meant.

She inhales deeply.

KOWALSKI

That's nice.

He is really gone. Saying silly things after listening to silly things. Why is he so sleepy?

HITCH-HIKER

That's not nice. That's not nice at all!

KOWALSKI

What isn't?

HITCH-HIKER
San Francisco.

KOWALSKI
Why isn't Frisco nice? It's the
only nice place left.

HITCH-HIKER
It is now but it won't last. And
that's real mean.

KOWALSKI
Why?

HITCH-HIKER
You know what's going to happen
over there very soon.

KOWALSKI
What?

HITCH-HIKER
The whole town is going to
disappear. It will be blown up,
erased, razed by an earthquake -
the biggest ever.

KOWALSKI
How do you know?

HITCH-HIKER
I know.

KOWALSKI
Who told you?

HITCH-HIKER
People who know. But then
everybody knows that. Even the
papers say so.

KOWALSKI
Lies, all lies.

HITCH-HIKER
But it's true. The signs are
everywhere.
(pause)
Please don't go to San Francisco!

KOWALSKI
Have to.

HITCH-HIKER

Please don't

KOWALSKI

Must.

HITCH-HIKER

Is that final?

KOWALSKI

Why, yes!

She changes her expression altogether.

HITCH-HIKER

Well, then, I'll tell you my name.
Are you listening?

KOWALSKI

I'm listening.

HITCH-HIKER

I am the Queen of Spades.

QUICK DREAM-FLASHBACK

CLOSE UP BLACKIE

He is in the Denver garage. He shows KOWALSKI a deck of playing cards. He takes one card out - it is the queen of spades. He motions OFFSHOT.

VIEWPOINT.

The brand-new Galaxie.

BLACKIE (OFF)

The Queen of Spades.

The CAMERA ZOOM IN and we see the HITCH-HIKER at the steering-wheel, smiling mysteriously.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

Who wakes up with a start.

INT. GALAXIE (CALIFORNIA) NIGHT

The HITCH-HIKER is not with him any more. He looks for her everywhere. But she is gone, vanished.

KOWALSKI

Hey, you!

He gets out of the car.

EXT. GALAXIE NIGHT

He looks for her all around the car.

KOWALSKI

Hey, where are you?

But she is nowhere to be seen. He gets back into the car, starts it up and begins searching for her.

EXT. FIELDS NIGHT

He looks everywhere in the neighbouring fields.

VIEWPOINT

KOWALSKI is using his headlights as searchlights. But she has disappeared completely.

EXT. FIELDS AND HIGHWAY NIGHT

The Galaxie comes back onto the road. KOWALSKI is driving slowly.

INT. GALAXIE NIGHT

He is looking everywhere.

VIEWPOINT THROUGH WINDSHIELD

She is not on the side of the road nor on the highway.

EXT. GALAXIE NIGHT

Going slow. Suddenly headlights hit the car.

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

Blinded by the light.

CUT TO:

INSERT ELECTRONIC MAP

A purple arrow runs along a road.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY NIGHT

The Galaxie is being chased by patrol cars, very close behind - headlights beaming, intermittent lights flashing on top of the speed chasers.

INT. GALAXIE NIGHT

KOWALSKI driving expertly.

EXT. HIGHWAY NIGHT

The Galaxie beginning to out-run the chasers.

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

He steers the car sharply.

EXT. BEND NIGHT

The Galaxie takes a very narrow steep bend and drives off the road. It stops not very far from it, hidden among trees, all lights out.

INT. GALAXIE NIGHT

KOWALSKI waiting.

VIEWPOINT

The patrol cars go past, howling, with all their sirens turned on.

INT. GALAXIE NIGHT

KOWALSKI waits for a little while. Then he starts up once more - but without turning the lights on.

EXT. GALAXIE NIGHT

The car comes back onto the road. Then it tears away in the opposite direction driving with all lights out.

CUT TO:

INSERT ELECTRONIC MAP

The purple arrow turns around and goes in the opposite direction too. The arrow is being trailed by small, running red dots.

CUT TO:

EXT. RADIO STATION BUILDING (RENO) DAY

It is very early in the morning. SUPER SPIC is being helped out of a car that has just parked in front of the station. A woman - his wife - comes with him and they are both followed by a dark, strong man, obviously a body guard. SUPER SPIC looks in bad shape, his lips swollen and he has one or two band-aids across his face. They all go towards the building.

Before entering the woman notices something new on the facade. She tells SUPER SPIC about it. The body guard looks at it too. The CAMERA PANS UP and we see the neon sign, considerably altered. Where the word 'STATION' followed the initials 'KOW', hangs a streamer - with the 'ALSKI' painted on it, crudely, So the whole sign now reads: KOWALSKI

INT. STUDIO DAY

SUPER SPIC patiently waits for the record to finish. When it does --

SUPER SPIC

A very good morning to you all, folks! Sunday morning it is, with all men of good will - and some of evil will thrown in for good measure - all peace-loving Christians ready to go to church, and here am I, yours truly, Super Spic - or just a spic to some of you - bantering this stream of unconsciousness and peddling labels for the sake of good music and the pleasure of the audience, as they say.

(MORE)

SUPER SPIC (CONT'D)
But I am here on Sunday for the first time in my life and for the first time since this KOW station began! -- not only to DJ - you and do my own thing. Also to tell you a story. Let's start it at the beginning. But - before starting - here's some Sunday morning music --- !!

ON SOUND: Folk Music.

CUT TO:

EXT. SKY DAY

An enormous bulldozer is being carried by a twin-engined Army-Transport helicopter.

EXT. ROAD BUILDING SITE DAY

A speed cop talking to the foreman of a road-building crew. The cop points to a steam-roller beside him.

EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

A row of patrol cars heading in the same direction.

INSERT MAP

The electronic map being criss-crossed by red dots, blue dots, yellow dots. The purple arrow is going up and pointing straight at a big white cross.

CUT TO:

INT. RADIO STUDIO DAY

SUPER SPIC is finishing his story.

SUPER SPIC
-- and today - in a beautiful gesture made by beautiful people - this radio station has been renamed KOW-alski! ...

CUT TO:

EXT. ROADBLOCK DAY

The roadblock has been already organized as shown at the beginning of the FILM. But now the place is beginning to fill up with private cars, coming from the main highway and secondary road.

INT. RADIO STUDIO DAY

SUPER SPIC is pleading over the microphone.

SUPER SPIC
Hello, Kowalski? Kowalski, are you listening to me? It's important that you're tuned in to KOW station. Kowalski...

INT. TRUCK DAY

Two truck-drivers are listening to the radio.

SUPER SPIC (V.O.)
Kowalski please tune in KOW station...

FIRST TRUCK DRIVER changes station on the radio.

SECOND TRUCK DRIVER
What the hell is that?

FIRST TRUCK DRIVER
Some bullshit publicity!

INT. HIGHWAY PATROL HQ DAY

We see the Galaxie being shown on three different television monitors, being shot at by helicopter and tele-lenses. Many scenes of the prologue are seen again - simultaneously - in BLACK AND WHITE. Then the CAMERA PANS AROUND and the whole room is an anthill, with policemen and police women coming and going, operators talking simultaneously to patrol cars, tele-typers bring in news, etc. It all looks like the general headquarters of any army in the middle of a decisive battle.

EXT. ROADBLOCK DAY

This all looks like a fairground.

- 1 - Cars are being parked and cordoned off around the roadblock.
- 2 - Film crews shooting people here and there.
- 3 - Television newsmen interviewing bystanders.
- 4 - Married couples with children, prams, dogs, paper hats.
- 5 - Dozens of teeny-boppers, micro-boppers and groupies.

INT. RADIO STUDIO DAY

In the background SUPER SPIC is making agitated signals to the ENGINEER in his control-room. It is a new man.

ON SOUND: Taped music starts.

CLOSE UP SUPER SPIC

SUPER SPIC
Fuck it! It's useless. He's not
listening any more - and he's
heading for a trap!
(shouting at Engineer)
Cut it off!

He is ready to broadcast once more.

INSERT CAR RADIO

SUPER SPIC (V.O.) (CONT'D)
-- all the highway patrol force of
California is waiting near
Livermore off US Route 50 leading
to Frisco, for the Galaxie and its
driver Kowalski, to arrive at this
checkpoint. They are being helped
by the local police, the FBI and
the US Army! WoW!!! That's dealing
with the enemy from a position of
strength!

As SUPER SPIC talks the CAMERA PULLS BACK. But we care in another car. Some groupies are on an outing with friends. They are necking and prancing about as theyh listen to the station.

1ST GROUPIE
Hey, let's go there!

2ND GROUPIE
Yeah, that could be fun!

1ST BOYFRIEND
No! Let's go to the beach!

1ST GROUPIE
But this could be more fun!

2ND BOYFRIEND
Who's this guy Kobolski anyway?

1ST GROUPIE
Don't know.

2ND GROUPIE
Never heard of him!

CUT TO:

EXT. ROADBLOCK (HELICOPTER SHOT) DAY

The enclosure, the police cars, the bulldozer and the thousands of people surrounding the roadblock give everything the exact atmosphere of a crowded, open, three-ring circus.

INSERT HAND

A radio button in it.

FULL SHOT KOWALSKI

He takes it from the seat and looks at it. He wonders what it could be. Then he knows and inserts it in the radio.

ON SOUND: A hint of bull-fighting music.

In the BACKGROUND we see the wooden gate of a ranch, the car halted. KOWALSKI listens to the music while smoking quietly.

CUT TO:

FULL SHOT SUPER SPIC

He sits some distance from his table.

CLOSE UP SUPER SPIC

He begins chewing his finger-nails.

CUT TO:

EXT. GALAXIE DAY

The car speeding towards the roadblock.

INT. GALAXIE DAY

KOWALSKI determinedly driving.

LONG MOVING SHOT THE ROADBLOCK

Coming closer and closer towards CAMERA.

CLOSE UP KOWALSKI

The light is hurting his eyes.

MOVING SHOT HIGHWAY

A blazing glaring blinding endless whiteness.

FULL SHOT GALAXIE

As the car hits a slope and sails up. It is flung into a long leap and the car seems to be taking off, finally airborne.

QUICK CUT TO:

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

A series of SHORT SCENES, mounted like a kaleidoscope vanishing and fading at CENTRE OF SCREEN, where there is a small diamond-hard light. These SCENES are of contemporary life in the USA, taken from newsreels, newspapers, photos, magazines, etc., and showing not only the extraordinary but the ordinary as well, not only violence and passion but also peacefulness and complacency - the horror and beauty that is reality.

CUT TO:

FULL SHOT GALAXIE

The car is still in mid-air. Now it lands back onto the road.

ON SOUND: Bull-fighting trumpet call - moment-de-la-verdad theme

BIG CLOSE UP

KOWALSKI's eyes.

FULL MOVING SHOT ROAD BLOCK

The people, the barricade, the bulldozers being approached vertiginously.

FULL SHOT GALAXIE

The car speeding towards the barricade.

FULL SHOT KOWALSKI

Gripping the steering-wheel.

HIGH ANGLE SHOT ROADBLCK AND GALAXIE

The car rushing towards the bulldozer.

EXTREME BIG CLOSE UP KOWALSKI'S EYES

He has a flickering moment of doubt.

VIEWPOINT MOVING SHOT

The roadblock. The CAMERA ZOOMS IN and we distinguish a young mother with a baby in her arms.

FULL SHOT KOWALSKI

He jabs his foot out for the brake pedal.

FULL SHOT GALAXIE

The car begins an about face but then skids violently.

FULL SHOT BARRICADE

The Galaxie skidding towards it and finally crashing, exploding into pieces, catching fire.

CUT TO:

FULL SHOT SUPER SPIC

Who jumps up from his chair and takes off his glasses.

CUT TO:

FULL SHOT BARRICASE

Firemen rushing towards the crash, people running to and/or from the site, policemen trying to herd the crowd.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP SUPER SPIC

His blind, barren eyes looking into the CAMERA.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROADBLOCK DAY

The fire is out, the people are beginning to scatter and leave the place.

CUT TO:

BIG CLOSE UP SUPER SPIC

He is silently crying.

EXT. BARRICADE DAY

The place is almost empty, the Galaxie is a heap of charred debris.

The the CAMERA PANS SLOWLY UP and we see in the horizon the white towers of a distant city. Over it we print this legend:

SAN FRANCISCO

Sunday, 11:00 am

A brilliant light blurs the legend. The SCREEN begins to FADE OUT. The we see the purest white we can get and over it we print in bold black letters:

THE END

